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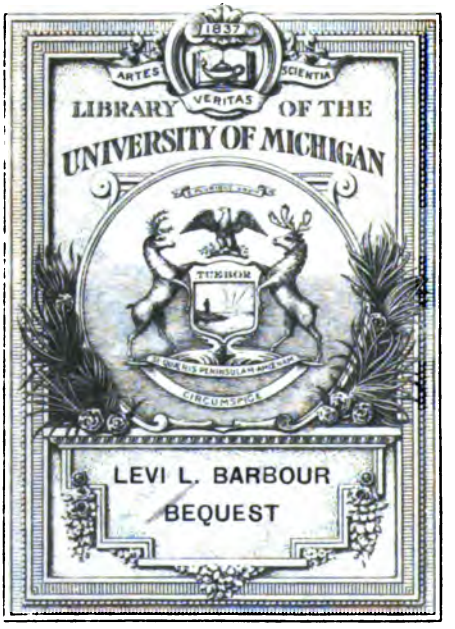
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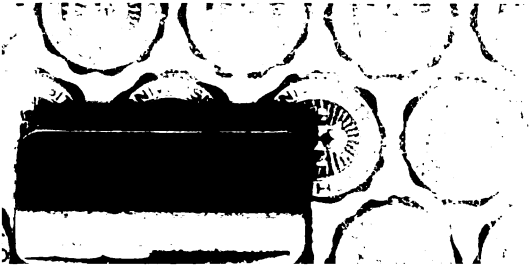
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GIL BLAS ESCAPING FROM THE ROBBERS CAVE.

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS,

OF SANTILLANE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF MONSIEUR LE SAGE,

BY

TOBIAS SMOLLETT, M.D.,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

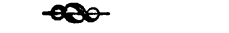
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SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.



When it is considered how much delight his works have afforded to readers of either sex, of all ages, and of all countries, it cannot but surprise us to find how little the memory of Le Sage is indebted for the attentions either of cotemporary or succeeding Biographers. The particulars that we are about to communicate are all that we have been able to collect, after much and patient research; but we think we can venture to say, that, meagre as it is, the present is the fullest account of him that has yet been laid before the Public.

Alain-René Le Sage was born in the Isle of Ruys, in Lower Britanny, in the year 1667; and, after the usual course of studies at Vannes, began early to distinguish himself, by a fine flow of imagination as a writer of poetry and of romance. The first production by which he became known, was a paraphrastical translation of the "*Letters of Aristænetes,*" from the Greek, in two volumes 12mo. He afterwards applied himself to the study of the Spanish language; made a journey into Spain, to obtain a knowledge of its manners and customs; and acquired a high relish for the writers of that nation, whom he has in his own productions imitated with extraordinary success.

His principal works are,

1. A version, from the Spanish of Aleman's "*Life of Guzman d'Alfarache;* or, *The Spanish Rogue;*" in two volumes 12 mo. in which all that was tedious in the original is omitted, and all that was pleasant preserved. In the preface, we find him thus speaking of his labour: "I dare say there are many good things in this Translation, because they are none of my own; and some bad ones, which I am not bound to vindicate; and whoever lays them to my charge will do me wrong; for without vanity be it spoken, there would have been many more of the latter, if I had not abridged or omitted them. I have also introduced several new turns of thought and expression, that the whole might assume a modern appearance. It is not easy to make a Spanish suit, especially an old one, fit a Frenchman; for the antipathy between the two nations appears in every thing. Though this book be not exactly calculated for perusal in Lent, or on Church-days, it will admirably well suit carnival time. It is fitted to all shapes and sizes; a saddle for every horse. It only needs to be tried; and many, who believe that it was made for others, will find that the coat sets as well upon them, as if the tailor had cut it out by their own measure. The misfortune is, that every one believes himself tall and well-shaped; and yet there are hardly any but crooked and hump-backed men in the world. There is no man but looks on himself with pleasure and admiration; while in others, he sees nothing but to laugh and rail at. This is really the plain truth of the matter: we cannot correct it; and he, who should set up for a reformer, would find that he had a hard task of it," &c.—In fact, the version of our Author is both more agreeable

and more instructive than the original, in which the reflections are spun out to a tedious length; while in the French version, there is as much good sense, and more pleasantry; as much sound moral, and more wit.

2. "*The Bachelor of Salamanca*; or, *Memoirs of Don Cherubim de la Ronda;*" in two volumes 12 mo. of which work the *Journal Literaire* for 1736, part ii. p. 477, speaks thus: "M. Le Sage is author of The Bachelor of Salamanca. This the public would have discovered, had his name not been advertised to it. It is written in the same taste and in the same style as the rest of the works which have been published under that author's name, and cannot fail of increasing his reputation. It consists of incidents which have nothing of the marvellous, either in themselves, or with respect to the persons to whom they happen; for which reason they must necessarily please all readers of taste. The marvellous tires the imagination, and becomes puerile when carried too far; nature, on the contrary, amuses and diverts it." A still higher eulogium is passed on this work, in *Observations sur les Ecrits Modernes*, tom. iv. p. 346. It is, indeed, a well-written story, interspersed with useful reflections on the manners of the age.

3. "*The Adventures of Gil Blas of Santillane,*" in four volumes 12mo. The idea of this work, so famed in every civilized part of the world, would appear to have originated during the Author's former labour on Aleman's *D'Alfarache;* the structure, however, is wholly his own. It abounds with accurate pictures of men and manners,*

* His Romance of Gil Blas continues to be read, because he has imitated nature in it. VOLTAIRE

with ingenious and amusing incidents, and with just reflections; and is, perhaps, at once the most moral and most entertaining romance that any nation has hitherto produced. As this, however, is the very work to which the present brief memoir has been written as an accompaniment, there is the less reason to dwell upon its merits, as they will forcibly press themselves on the notice of every reader.

4. "*New Adventures of Don Quixote,*" in two volumes 12mo. Although this work is undoubtedly inferior to its great prototype, it nevertheless contains many amusing pleasantries.

5. "*Le Diable Boiteux,*" in two volumes 12mo. The proper English of this title is, *The Limping* (or *Lame*) *Devil;* but the Translator of the work into our tongue (we believe, Sir John Vanbrugh) preferred calling it, "*The Devil upon Two Sticks;*" by which name, accordingly, it is always known among us. It is founded on a little facetious Spanish piece of Guevara's, entitled *El Diablo Cojuelo, Novella de la otra Vida,* but is a very great improvement on that production. It is calculated at once to enliven the mind, and to correct the manners. As a proof of its eager reception by the public, we are told, in the *Dictionnaire Historique,* that soon after its appearance, two noblemen actually contended sword in hand, for the possession of the last copy that remained to be sold of the second edition.

6. "*Amusing Miscellanies, consisting of the most ingenious Sallies of Wit, and most striking Traits of History,*" 12 mo. This collection, like most others of its kind, is a mixture of good, bad, and indifferent.

7. "*Roland the Amorous,*" in two volumes 12

mo. a work which has never fallen in the way of the writer of this memoir.

8. "*The Comical History of Estevanille Gonzales, surnamed The Merry Fellow,*" in two volumes 12mo. This is little more than a translation from the Spanish; but is strongly marked by the sprightly wit of the author of Gil Blas. It is not to be considered as a series of idle fictions, calculated only for amusement; but as containing well-drawn characters, and inculcating, through the medium of lively and pleasant descriptions and incidents, the most useful lessons of morality.

9. "*The Adventures of Beauchene;*"

10. "*The Walks of St. Cloud;*" neither of which has met our inspection.

Beside the works above specified, LE SAGE is celebrated also as a dramatic writer; in which character the following pieces are ascribed to his pen:

1. *Harlequin King of Serendib,* Comic Opera, in three acts, with songs, performed at the Fair of St. Germain, 1713.

2. *Harlequin Malomet,* Comic opera, in one act, with songs, performed at the Fair of St. Lawrence, July 25, 1714; together with

3. *The Fall of Nostradamus,* Comic Opera, in one act, with songs; and,

4. *The Fair of Guibrai,* Comic Opera, in one act, with songs: all three met with great success.

5. *Columbine Harlequin;* or, *Harlequin Columbine;* Comic Opera of one act, with songs; represented at the Fair of St. Lawrence, 1715.

6. *The Girdle of Venus,* Comic Opera, in two acts with songs; performed at the Fair of St. Germain, 1715.

7. *Telemachus,* Comic Opera, with songs, in

one act. This is a sort of parody of a tragedy of the same name, by the Abbe Pellegrin, and was acted with astonishing success at the Fair of St. Germain, 1715.

8. *The Waters of Merlin*, Comic Opera, in one act, nearly all songs, acted at the Fair of St. Germain, 1715.

9. *Harlequin Orpheus Junior*, Comic Opera, in three acts, performed at the Fair of St. Germain, 1718, but never printed.

10. *The Princess of Carisme*, Comic Opera, in three acts, performed with great success at the Fair of St. Lawrence, 1718.

11. *The Regiment of Madmen*, Comic Opera, in one act, performed with success 1721.

12. *Robinson*, Comic Opera, in one act, presented 1721, at the Fair of St. Germain with much success; it, however, was not printed.

13. *The Young Old Man*, Comedy, in three acts. This piece was taken from the Persian Tales, and acted at the opening of the Theatre for Italian Comedies, in the Fair of St. Lawrence.

14. *The Rage of Love*, Comic Opera, in one act, performed in 1725.

15. *The Pilgrims of Mecca*, Comic Opera, in three acts, performed 1726, with great applause.

16. *Achmet and Almanzine*, Comic Opera, in three acts, performed with great success 1728.

17. *The Queen of Barostan*, Comic Opera, of one act, performed February 18, 1729.

18. *The Dangerous Rival*, Comic Opera, of one act, performed August 17, 1734, but not printed.

19. *The Two Brothers*, Comic Opera, of one act, performed September 21, 1734.

20. *The History of the Comic Opera*; or, *The Metamorphoses of the Fair*. Comic Opera, in four

acts, presented for the first time June 27, 1736, but not printed. The first act contained a show, called *Harlequin a Surgeon in Barbary*, and a farce under the title of *The True Lie*. The second act was *Pierrot Servant to a Magician*, a monologue, and *Harlequin Orpheus*, a pantomime. The third act was *Ariadne and Theseus*. The fourth act was *The Enemies Reconciled*.

21. *The Female Savage*, or, *The Wild Girl*, Comic Opera, in one act, represented 1732. This piece was on the subject of a wild girl, who about that time had been found in the woods near Rochelle.

22. *The Husband Preferred*, Comic Opera, in one act, preceded by a Prologue called *The Beneficent Fairy*, acted August 11, 1736.

23. *The Traitor Punished*, Comedy, in five acts, in prose, printed in 1700. It is almost a translation from a Spanish play, by Don Francisco de Rojas; and from which Dancourt formed his comedy called *Treason Punished*.

24. *Don Felix de Mendoza*, Comedy, in five acts, in prose. This is a translation from the *Guardar y guardar se* of Lope de Vega, and was never acted.

25. *The Point of Honour*; or, *The Arbiter of Disputes*, Comedy, in five acts, represented at the Theatre Francois, in 1702. It was afterwards reduced to three acts, and performed under the second title only, in 1725.

26. *Cesar Ursin*, Comedy, in five acts, in prose, performed at the Theatre Francois, in March 1707; but it ran only six nights.

27. *Crispin the Rival of his Master*, Comedy, in one act, first performed in 1707, and often revived

28. *The Tontine*, Comedy in one act, perform-

ed, without success, at the Theatre Francois, February 20, 1732.

29. *Turcaret*, Comedy, in five acts, produced at the Theatre Francois, February 14, 1709, and often revived. It depicts most naturally the conduct of some of the French financiers of that time; their inordinate expenses, and their ridiculous fondness for the society of women of condition, of whom they were commonly the dupes.

30. *The Force of Love*, Comedy, in one act, performed for the first time by the Italian Comedians at the Fair of St. Lawrence; together with,

31. *The Fair of the Fairies*, Comedy in one act.

In some of the foregoing pieces Le Sage was assisted by Messrs. Fuzelier, D'Orneval, and Panard. There is also attributed to our Author,

32. *The Jealous Lovers*, Comedy, (anonymous) in three acts, in prose, performed with great success by the Italian Comedians, 1735.

Thus have we registered what, as far as we can discover, form the entire collection of the works of Le Sage, who is justly ranked among those that have written the French language in its greatest purity and perfection. In the two comedies of *Crispin the Rival of his Master*, and *Turcaret*, there are several scenes which Moliere himself would not have been ashamed to own. Invention, indeed, was not among the chief talents of Le Sage, but he had in an eminent degree wit, taste, and a facility in embellishing and improving upon the ideas of others.

Although possessed of such great talents, however, he was not a favourite of fortune; a certain fixed idea of personal independence causing him always to neglect the customary means of advancement. He died at Boulogne-sur-Mer, (whi

ther he had retired to the house of a son of his who was a Canon of the Cathedral) November 17, 1747, in the 80th year of his age.

Le Sage had several children: one of these we have just mentioned; another was a very favourite actor at the Theatre Francois, in the serious cast, under the name of Montmenil; his deportment was dignified, and his acting true to nature. The stage, however, had possessed him but a few years, when he died suddenly, September 8, 1743. A third son was a comedian in Germany, and known under the name of *Pittence*.

For several years before his decease, Le Sage laboured under the affliction of extreme deafness. He resided in Paris, with great reputation, but without any other comforts or conveniences than his writings procured him; for he was a man of great probity and sincerity, without patrimony, and, as we have before observed, had a large family to bring up. Though precluded, perhaps, from access to the great, whose connexion with the government might have promoted his interest, his company was eagerly sought after by others, who, though not equally conspicuous by their rank or fortune, were in the enjoyment of all the endearing qualities of society. His compositions show him to have been perfectly well acquainted with the world, its foibles and its follies; and, indeed, most of the companies in which he mingled afforded him new subjects for speculation. He had an admirable talent at seizing the ridiculous in men and manners, and placing it in the most pleasing and instructive light; in short, we may sum up all by comparing the pen of Le Sage with the pencil of Hogarth.

S. J.

THE AUTHOR'S DECLARATION.

As there are some people who cannot read, without making applications of the vicious and ludicrous characters they meet with in works of this kind, I declare to these evil-minded readers, that they will be to blame, if they apply any of the pictures drawn in this book. I publicly own, that my purpose is, to represent life as we find it; but God forbid that I should undertake to delineate any man in particular! Let no reader, therefore, assume to himself that which as properly belongs to others; lest, as Phædrus observes, he make an unlucky discovery of his own character. *Stultenudabit animi conscientiam.* There are physicians in Castile, as well as in France, whose practice consists in evacuating their patients a little too much; and the same vices and peculiarities of disposition are to be seen every where. I confess, that I have not always exactly observed the manners of the Spaniards; and those who are acquainted with the disorderly lives of the players at Madrid, may reproach me with having described their irregularities with too much tenderness: but I thought it was necessary to soften them a little, that they might be the more comformable to the manners of our own country.

GIL BLAS TO THE READER.

Gentle Reader, before thou readest the history of my life, give me leave to entertain thee with a short story.

Two scholars, in their way from Pennafiel to Salamanca, being thirsty and fatigued, sat down by a spring they met with on the road: there, while they rested themselves, after having quenched their thirst, they perceived, by accident, upon a stone that was even with the surface of the earth, some letters, already half effaced by time, and the feet of flocks that came to water at the fountain: having washed

it, they read these words in the Castilian tongue. *Aqui est a encerrada el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcias:* 'Here is interred the soul of the Licentiate Peter Garcias.' The younger of the two students, being a pert coxcomb, no sooner read this inscription, than he cried with a loud laugh, 'A good joke i'faith! here is interred the soul—a soul interred! Who the devil could be the author of such a wise epitaph!' So saying, he got up and went away; while his companion, who was blest with a greater share of penetration, said to himself, 'There is certainly some mystery in this affair: I'll stay, in order to unriddle it.' Accordingly, his comrade was no sooner out of sight, than he began to dig with his knife all round the stone; and succeeded so well, that he got it up, and found beneath it a leathern purse, containing a hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written the following sentence, in Latin: 'Whosoever thou art, who hast wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, inherit my money, and make a better use of it than I have done.' The scholar, rejoiced at his good fortune, placed the stone in its former situation, and walked home to Salamanca, with the soul of the licentiate.

Of what complexion soever thou mayest be, friendly Reader, thou wilt certainly resemble one of those two scholars; for, if thou perusest my adventures, without perceiving the moral instruction they contain, thou wilt reap no harvest from thy labour; but, if thou readest with attention, thou wilt find in them, according to the precept of Horace, profit mingled with pleasure.

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THE

ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS

OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

Of the birth and education of Gil Blas.

My father, Blas of Santillane, after having carried arms many years in the service of the Spanish monarchy, retired to the town in which he was born, where he chose a wife among the second-rate citizens; who, though she was no chicken, brought me into the world ten months after her marriage. They afterwards removed to Oviedo, where my mother became a waiting-woman, and my father squire to a lady:* and as they had nothing but their wages to depend upon, I should have run the hazard of being very poorly educated, had it not been my good fortune to have a canon for my uncle, whose name was Gil Perez: he was my mother's eldest brother as well as my godfather; a little man, three feet and a half high, excessively fat, with his head sunk between his shoulders; otherwise, an

* Squire, or gentleman-usher, (in Spanish, *escudero*) is a person who waits on a lady. Formerly, decayed gentlemen were entertained by the nobility for this purpose; they derived their appellation from those eminent squires, whose office it was to carry the shield (in Spain called *escudo*) of their master.

honest priest, whose chief care was to live well, that is, to make good cheer; and his living, which was no lean one, furnished him with the means.

He carried me home to his house, while an infant, and took the charge of my education; and I appeared so sprightly, that he resolved to cultivate my genius. With this view, he bought for me a hornbook, and undertook (himself) to learn me to read; a task no less useful to him than to me: for, in teaching me my letters, he had recourse to his reading, which he had always neglected too much; and by dint of application, enabled himself to read his breviary without hesitation; a qualification he had never been possessed of before. He had all the inclination in the world to instruct me in the Latin tongue also, because it would have been so much money saved to him: but, alas, poor Gil Perez! he had never in his life understood the rudiments of that language, and was, perhaps, (but this I do not vouch for a certainty) the most illiterate canon of the whole chapter. I have been told, indeed, that he had not obtained his benefice by his erudition; but owed it entirely to the gratitude of some pious nuns, for whom he had acted the part of a zealous commissioner, and by whose influence the order of priesthood had been conferred upon him without examination.

He was therefore obliged to subject me to the birch of a schoolmaster, and accordingly sent me to the house of Dr. Godinez, who was esteemed the most expert flogger in Oviedo. I improved so well under his instructions, that in five or six years I understood a little Greek; was a pretty good Latin scholar; and applying myself also to logic, began to argue apace: I was so much in

love with dispute, that I stopped passengers, known or unknown, and proposed arguments to them; and sometimes meeting with Hibernian geniuses, who were very glad of the occasion, it was a good jest to see us dispute: by our extravagant gestures, grimace, contortions, our eyes full of fury, and our mouths full of foam, one would have taken us for bedlamites, rather than philosophers.

By these means, however, I acquired the reputation of a great scholar in town; a circumstance that pleased my uncle extremely, as he foresaw that I should not be much longer an expense to him. 'Hark'e, Gil Blas,' said he to me one day; 'thou art no longer a child, and it is high time for a brisk lad of seventeen, like thee, to push thy fortune in the world: I am determined to send thee to Salamanca, where, with such genius and learning, thou canst not fail of obtaining some good post: thou shalt have some ducats in thy pocket, to bear thy expenses on the road; and I will give thee my own mule, which thou mayest sell at Salamanca for ten or twelve pistoles, and live upon the money until thou be settled to thy satisfaction.'

He could not have proposed any thing more agreeable to me; for I passionately longed to see the world: nevertheless, I had discretion enough to conceal my joy; and when the time of my departure arrived, affecting the most lively sorrow at leaving an uncle to whom I owed so many obligations, the honest man melted, and gave me more money than he would have done, could he have seen to the bottom of my heart. Before I set out, I went to take leave of my father and mother, who enriched me with advice; exhorted

me to pray to God for my uncle; to live inoffensively; to eschew evil; and, by all means, to refrain from stealing. After they had held forth a good while, they made me a present of their blessing, which was all I expected from them; and I, mounting my mule, bade adieu to Oviedo.

CHAPTER II.

Of his being grievously alarmed in his way to Pennaflor: of his conduct in that town; with an account of a person who supped with him.

Behold me then in the open field, clear of Oviedo, on the road to Pennaflor, master of my own conduct, of a sorry mule, and forty good ducats, exclusive of some rials, which I had stolen from my much honoured uncle. The first thing I did, was to let my beast go at discretion, that is, very gently; and throwing the bridle on her neck, I emptied my purse into my hat, and amused myself in counting my money: my joy was excessive; and as I had never seen so much cash before, I handled and gazed at it with insatiable delight. I had reckoned it, perhaps, twenty times over, when all of a sudden, my mule raising her head, and pricking up her ears, stopped in the midle of the highway. Imagining she was frighted at something, I looked about to see what was the matter, and perceived upon the ground an old hat turned up, with a rosary of beads in it; at the same time heard a lamentable voice pronounce these words: 'Mr. Traveller, for God's sake have pity on a poor maimed

soldier! drop, if you please, a few bits into the hat, and you shall be rewarded in heaven.' I turned my eyes immediately on the side from whence the voice issued, and saw, at the root of a bush, about twenty or thirty paces from me, a kind of soldier, who, upon two cross sticks, supported the barrel of a carbine, in my apprehension, longer than a pike, with which he seemed to take aim at me: at this apparition, which made me quake for the church's money, I stopped short, and pocketing my ducats in a great hurry, took out some rials, approaching the hat that was exposed for the reception of the extorted charity, and dropped them into it, one after another, that the beggar might see how nobly I used him. He was satisfied with the bounty, and gave me a benediction for every kick that I bestowed on the sides of my mule, in order to get out of his reach; but the plaguy beast, regardless of my impatience, moved not a step the faster, having lost the power of galloping, by a long habit of carrying my uncle at her own leisure.

I did not look upon this adventure as a very favourable omen for my journey; I reflected that I might meet with something still worse before I should arrive at Salamanca; and could not help blaming my uncle's imprudence for having neglected to put me under the direction of a carrier. This, to be sure, was what he ought to have done; but he imagined that, by giving me his mule, my journey might be less expensive; and he had more regard to that consideration, than to the dangers I might be exposed to on the road. In order, therefore, to repair his mismanagement, I determined (as soon as I should arrive at Pennaflor) to sell the mule, and take the

opportunity of a carrier for Astorga, from whence I could transport myself to Salamanca by the same convenience; for although I had never been out of Oviedo, I was not ignorant of the names of the towns through which I must pass, having informed myself of these things before I set out.

I arrived in safety at Pennaflor, and halting at the gate of an inn that made a tolerable appearance, I no sooner alighted than the landlord came out and received me with great civility; he untied my portmanteau with his own hands, and throwing it on his shoulder, conducted me into a room, while one of his servants led my mule into the stable. This inn-keeper, the greatest talker of the Asturies, and as ready to relate his own affairs without being asked, as to pry into those of another, told me that his name was Andrew Corcuelo; that he had served many years in the king's army in quality of a serjeant, and had quitted the service fifteen months ago, to marry a damsel of Castropol, who (though she was a little swarthy) knew very well how to turn the penny. He said a thousand other things which I could have dispensed with the hearing of; but after having made me his confidant, he thought he had a right to exact the same condescension from me, and accordingly asked whence I came, whither I was going, and what I was. I was obliged to answer article by article, for he accompanied every question with a profound bow, and begged me to excuse his curiosity with such a respectful air, that I could not refuse to satisfy him in every particular. This engaged me in a long conversation with him, and gave me occasion to mention my design, and the reasons I had

for disposing of my mule, that I might take the opportunity of a carrier. He approved of my intention, though not in a very succinct manner; for he represented all the troublesome accidents that might befall me on the road; he recounted many dismal stories of travellers, and I began to be afraid he would never have done: he concluded at length, however, with telling me, that if I had a mind to sell my mule, he was acquainted with a very honest jockey who would buy her. I assured him he would oblige me in sending for him, upon which he went in quest of him immediately with great eagerness. It was not long before he returned with his man, whom he introduced to me as a person of exceeding honesty, and we went into the yard all together, where my mule was produced, and passed and repassed before the jockey, who examined her from head to foot, and did not fail to speak very disadvantageously of her. I own there was not much to be said in her praise; but, however, had it been the pope's mule he would have found some defects in her. He assured me that she had all the faults a mule could have; and to convince me of his veracity, appealed to the landlord, who doubtless had his reasons for supporting his friend's assertions. 'Well,' said this dealer, with an air of indifference, 'how much money do you expect for this wretched animal?' After the eulogium he had bestowed on her, and the attestation of Signior Corcuelo, whom I believed to be a man of honesty and understanding, I would have given my mule for nothing; and therefore told him I would rely on his integrity, bidding him appraise the beast in his own conscience, and I would stand to the valuation. Upon this he as

sumed the man of honour; and replied, that in engaging his conscience, I took him on the weak side: in good sooth that did not seem to be his strong side, for instead of valuing her at ten or twelve pistoles as my uncle had done, he fixed the price at three ducats, which I accepted with as much joy as if I had made an excellent bargain.

After having so advantageously disposed of my mule, the landlord conducted me to a carrier who was to set out the next day for Astorga. This muleteer let me know that he would depart before daybreak, and promised to awake me in time, after we had agreed upon the price, as well for the hire of the mule as for my board on the road; and when every thing was settled between us, I returned to the inn with Corcuelo, who, by the way, began to recount the carrier's history; he told me every circumstance of his character in town, and, in short, was going to stupify me again with his intolerable loquacity, when, luckily for me, a man of a pretty good appearance prevented my misfortune, by accosting him with great civility. I left them together and went on, without suspecting that I had the least concern in their conversation. When I arrived at the inn I called for supper, and it being a meagre day, was fain to put up with eggs; which while they got ready, I made up to my landlady, whom I had not seen before: she appeared handsome enough, and withal so sprightly and gay, that I should have concluded (even if her husband had not told me so) that her house was pretty well frequented. When the amlet I had bespoke was ready, I sat down to table by myself, and had not yet swallowed the first morsel when the landlord came in, followed by the man

who had stopped him in the street. This cavalier, who wore a long sword, and seemed to be about thirty years of age, advanced towards me with an eager air, saying, 'Mr. Student, I am informed that you are that Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, who is the link of philosophy and ornament of Oviedo! Is it possible that you are that mirror of learning, that sublime genius, whose reputation is so great in this country?—You know not,' continued he, addressing himself to the inn-keeper and his wife, 'you know not what you possess! You have a treasure in your house! Behold in this young gentleman the eighth wonder of the world!' Then turning to me, and throwing his arms about my neck, 'Forgive,' cried he, 'my transports! I cannot contain the joy that your presence creates!'

I could not answer for some time, because he locked me so close in his arms that I was almost suffocated for want of breath; and it was not till I had disengaged my head from his embraces, that I replied, 'Signior Cavalier, I did not think my name was known at Pennaflor.'—'How! known!' resumed he in his former strain, 'we keep a register of all the celebrated names within twenty leagues of us: you, in particular, are looked upon as a prodigy; and I don't at all doubt, that Spain will one day be as proud of you, as Greece was of her Seven Sages.' These words were followed by a fresh hug, which I was enforced to endure, though at the risk of strangulation. With the little experience I had, I ought not to have been the dupe of his professions and hyperbolical compliments: I ought to have known, by his extravagant flattery, that he was one of those parasites which abound in every

town, and who, when a stranger arrives, introduce themselves to him in order to fill their bellies at his expense: but my youth and vanity made me judge quite otherwise; my admirer appeared to me so much of a gentleman, that I invited him to take a share of my supper. 'Aye, with all my soul!' cried he, 'I am too much obliged to my kind stars for having thrown me in the way of the illustrious Gil Blas, not to enjoy my good fortune as long as I can! I have no great appetite,' pursued he, 'but I will sit down to bear you company, and eat a mouthful purely out of complaisance.'

So saying, my panegyrist took his place right over against me; and a cover being laid for him, attacked the amlet as voraciously as if he had fasted three whole days: by his complaisant beginning, I foresaw that our dish would not last long, and therefore ordered a second, which they dressed with such despatch, that it was served just as we—or rather he—had finished the first. He proceeded on this with the same vigour, and found means, without losing one stroke of his teeth, to overwhelm me with praises during the whole repast, which made me very well pleased with my sweet self. He drank in proportion to his eating; sometimes to my health, sometimes to that of my father and mother, whose happiness, in having such a son as me, he could not enough admire. All the while he plied me with wine, and insisted upon my doing him justice, while I toasted health for health, a circumstance which, together with his intoxicating flattery, put me into such good humour, that, seeing our second amlet half devoured, I asked the landlord, if he had no fish in the house. Signior Corcuelo,

who, in all likelihood had a fellow-feeling with the parasite, replied, 'I have a delicate trout, but those who eat it must pay for the sauce: 'tis a bit too dainty for your palate, I doubt.'—'What do you call too dainty?' said the sycophant, raising his voice, 'you're a wise-acre, indeed! Know, that there is nothing in this house too good for Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, who deserves to be entertained like a prince!'

I was pleased at his laying hold of the landlord's last words, in which he prevented me, who, finding myself offended, said, with an air of disdain, 'Produce this trout of yours, Gaffer Corcuelo, and give yourself no trouble about the consequence.' This was what the innkeeper wanted: he got it ready, and served it up in a trice. At sight of this new dish, I could perceive the parasite's eye sparkle with joy, and he renewed that complaisance—I mean for the fish—which he had already shown for the eggs. At last, however, he was obliged to give out for fear of accident, being crammed to the very throat: having, therefore, eaten and drank his bellyful, he thought proper to conclude the farce by rising from table and accosting me in these words—'Signior Gil Blas, I am too well satisfied with your good cheer to leave you without offering an important advice, which you seem to have great occasion for; henceforth beware of praise, and be upon your guard against every body you do not know. You may meet with other people inclined to divert themselves with your credulity, and perhaps to push things still further, but don't be duped again, nor believe yourself (though they should swear it) the eighth wonder of the world.' So saying,

he laughed in my face and stalked away. I was as much affected by this bite, as I have since been by misfortunes of far greater consequence. I could not forgive myself for having been so grossly imposed upon; or rather, I was shocked to find my pride so humbled: 'How!' said I to myself, 'has the traitor then made a jest of me? His design in accosting my landlord in the street, was only to pump him; or perhaps they understood one another! Ah, simple Gil Blas! go hang thyself, for shame, for having given such rascals an opportunity of turning thee into ridicule! I suppose they'll trump up a fine story of this affair, which will reach Oviedo, and doubtless do thee a great deal of honour, and make thy parents repent their having thrown away so much good counsel on an ass. Instead of exhorting me not to wrong any body, they ought to have cautioned me against the knavery of the world!' Chagrined with these mortifying reflections, and inflamed with resentment, I locked myself in my chamber and went to bed: where, however, I did not sleep, for before I could close my eyes, the carrier came to let me know he was ready to set out, and only waited for me. I got up instantly, and while I put on my clothes, Corcuelo brought me a bill, in which, I assure you, the trout was not forgotten: and I was not only obliged to gratify his exhorbitance, but I had also the mortification to perceive, while I counted the money, that the sarcastic knave remembered my adventure. After having paid sauce for a supper which I had so ill digested, I went to the muleteer with my bags, wishing the parasite, the inn-keeper, and his inn, at the devil.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Carrier's temptation on the road, and its consequence: How Gil Blas in attempting to get out of the frying-pan fell into the fire.

I was not the only person who travelled with the carrier, there being in company two children belonging to a gentleman at Pennaflor, a little strolling ballad-singer of Mondonedo, and a young tradesman of Astorga, who was bringing home a girl whom he had married at Verco. We became acquainted with one another presently, and every one in a very short time told whence he came, and whither he was going. The new-married lady was so stupid and tawny, that I had no great pleasure in looking at her, but her youth and plumpness had a different effect upon the carrier, who resolved to make an attempt upon her inclinations: he spent the whole day in projecting this noble design, the execution of which he deferred until we should arrive at our last stage, which happened to be at Cacabelos. He accordingly made us alight at the first inn we came to, a house situate rather in the country than the town, the landlord of which he knew to be a complaisant and discreet person. He took care to have us conducted into a remote apartment, where he allowed us to sup in tranquillity; but when our meal was ended, he entered with a furious look, crying, 'blood and oons! I am rob

bed of one hundred pistoles, which I had in a leathern bag, and I must find them immediately, otherwise I will apply to the magistrate of the place, who is no joker in these matters, and have you all put to the rack till such time as you confess the crime and restore the money.' Having pronounced these dreadful words with a very natural air, he went out, leaving us all in the utmost consternation.

As we were strangers to each other, none of us had the least suspicion of the finesse; for my own part I suspected that the poor ballad-singer had done the deed, and perhaps he had the same opinion of me. Besides, we were all raw fools, utterly ignorant of the formalities used in such cases, and believed in good earnest, that the process would be begun by putting us all to the torture. Giving way, therefore, to our fear, we evacuated the room in a great hurry, some running into the street, others flying into the garden, and every one betaking himself to his heels for safety. Among the rest, the young tradesman of Astorga, as much scared as any of us at the thoughts of the torture, made his escape like another Æneas, without incommoding himself with his wife. It was then that the carrier, (as I have since learned) more incontinent than his mules, and overjoyed to see his stratagem succeed according to his expectation, went to the bride, boasted of his own ingenuity, and endeavoured to profit by the occasion; but this Lucrece of the Asturies, to whom the villanous aspect of her tempter lent new strength, made a vigorous resistance, and screamed most powerfully. The patrole, which happened at that instant to pass by the house that they knew deserved their attention, went in, and

demanded the reason of those cries: upon which the landlord, who sat singing in the kitchen, and pretended to know nothing of the matter, was obliged to conduct the officer and his guard into the chamber of the person who made the noise. They arrived very seasonably, the chaste Asturian being quite exhausted, and the commander (who was none of the most delicate people in the world) perceiving what was the matter, gave the amorous muleteer a wooden salutation with the handle of his halbert, addressing him at the same time in terms as inconsistent with modesty as the action that suggested them. This was not all: he apprehended the criminal, and carried him before the judge, together with his accuser, who, notwithstanding her disorder, would have gone of herself to crave justice for the outrage that was committed upon her. The magistrate having heard, and attentively considered the cause, found the defendant guilty; caused him to be stripped and scourged in his presence; and ordered that, if the husband of the plaintiff should not appear before next day, she should be escorted to Astorga by two horsemen, at the charge of the delinquent.

As for me, more terrified, perhaps, than the rest, I got into the country, and crossing I don't know how many fields and heaths, and leaping all the ditches I found in my way, I arrived at last at the border of a wood, and was just going into it with a view of concealing myself in some thicket, when all of a sudden, two men on horseback appeared before me, and called, 'Who goes there?" As my surprise hindered me from making immediate answer, they advanced, and each clapping a pistol to my throat, commanded me to

tell who I was, whence I came, my business in the forest, and above all things to hide nothing from them. To these interrogations, the manner of which seemed to me equal to the rack with which the carrier had threatened us, I replied, that I was a lad of Oviedo, going to Salamanca; recounted the alarm we had undergone, and confessed, that the fear of being put to the torture had induced me to run away. They burst out into a loud laugh at this discovery, which manfested the simplicity of my heart; and one of them said, 'Take courage, friend, come along with us, and fear nothing; we will put thee in a place of safety.' So saying, he made me get up behind him, and then we retreated into the wood.

Though I did not know what to make of this rencounter, I did not presage any thing bad from it: 'for,' said I to myself, 'if these people were thieves, they would have robbed, and perhaps murdered me at once: they must certainly be honest gentlemen who live hard by, and who seeing me in a panic, have pity on my condition, and carry me home with them out of charity.' But I did not long remain in suspense; for after several windings and turnings, which we performed in great silence, we came to the foot of a hill, where we alighted; and one of the horsemen said to me, 'this is our dwelling-place.' I looked around, but could perceive neither house, hut, nor the least appearance of any habitation: nevertheless, these two men lifted up a huge wooden trap-door, covered with earth and brambles, which concealed the entrance of a long shelving passage under ground, into which the horses went of themselves, like beasts that were used to it; while the cavaliers, taking the same path, made me follow

them; then lowering the cover, with cords fastened to the inside for that purpose, behold the worthy kinsman of my uncle Perez caught like a mouse in a trap!

CHAPTER IV.

A description of the subterranean habitation, and of what Gil Blas observed therein.

I now discovered my situation, and any one may easily believe that this discovery effectually dispelled my former fear; a terror more mighty and better founded took possession of my soul! I laid my account with losing my life as well as my ducats; and looking upon myself as a victim led to the altar, walked (more dead than alive) between my two conductors, who, feeling me tremble, exhorted me in vain to fear nothing. When we had gone about two hundred paces, turning and descending all the way, we entered into a stable, lighted by two great iron lamps hanging from the arch above. Here I saw plenty of straw, and a good many casks full of provender: there was room enough for twenty horses, but at that time there were only the two that we brought along with us, which an old negro, who seemed vigorous for his years, was tying to a rack. We went out of the stable, and by the dismal glimmer of some lamps that seemed to enlighten the place only to show the horrors of it, came to a kitchen, where an old cook-maid was busy in broiling steaks, and providing for supper. The kitchen was adorned with all necessary utensils,

and hard by there was a larder stored with all sorts of provisions. The cook (for I must draw her picture) was a person somewhat turned of sixty; in her youth the hair of her head had been red as a carrot, for time had not as yet so much bleached it but that one might still perceive some shades of its primitive colour; she had an olive complexion, a chin pointed and prominent, with lips fallen in, a huge aquiline nose that hung over her mouth, and eyes that flamed in purple.

'Well, dame Leonarda,' said one of the gentlemen, presenting me to this fair angel of darkness, 'here's a young man we have brought for you.' Then turning to me, and observing me pale and dismayed, 'Friend,' said he, 'banish thy fear, we will do thee no harm. Having occasion for a servant to assist our cook-maid, we met with thee, and happy it is for thee we did: thou shalt here supply the place of a young fellow, who let himself die about fifteen days ago: he was a lad of a very delicate complexion, but thou seemest to be more robust, and will not die so soon: indeed thou wilt never see the light of the sun again, but in lieu of that thou shalt have good cheer, and a rousing fire. Thou shalt pass thy time with Leonarda, who is a very gentle creature, and enjoy all thy little conveniences. I will show thee,' added he, 'that thou hast not got among beggars.' With these words he took up a flambeau, and bidding me follow him, carried me into a cellar, where I saw an infinite number of bottles and jars well corked, which he told me were filled with excellent wine. He afterwards made me pass through divers apartments, some of which contained bales of linen, others of silks and stuffs; in one I perceived gold and

silver, and a great quantity of plate in different cupboards. Then I followed him into a large hall, illuminated by three branches of copper, which also gave light to the rooms that communicated with it: here he put fresh questions to me; asked my name, and reason for leaving Oviedo; and when I had satisfied his curiosity in these particulars, 'Well, Gil Blas,' said he, 'since thy design in quitting the place of thy nativity was to obtain some good post, thou must certainly have been born with a cawl upon thy head, seeing thou hast fallen into our hands. I have already told thee that thou shalt live here in affluence, and roll upon gold and silver: nay, more, thou shalt be safe; for such is the contrivance of this retreat, that the officers of the holy brotherhood may come into the wood a hundred times without discovering it. The entry is unknown to every living soul except me and my comrades: perhaps thou wilt wonder how it could be executed without being perceived by the people in the neighbourhood. Know, then, my lad, that this is not a work of our hands, but was made many years ago; for after the Moors had got possession of Grenada, Arragon, and almost the whole of Spain, the Christians, rather than submit to the yoke of infidels, fled and concealed themselves in this country, in Biscay, and in the Asturies, whither the valiant Don Pelagio retired: fugitives, and dispersed in small numbers, they lived in mountains and woods; some lurked in caves, and others contrived many subterranean abodes, of which number this is one. Having afterwards been so lucky as to drive their enemies out of Spain, they returned into the towns, and since that time their retreats have

served for asylums to people of our profession. It is true, indeed, the holy brotherhood* have discovered and destroyed some of them; but there are still plenty remaining, and thank heaven I have lived here in safety near fifteen years; my name is Captain Rolando: I am chief of the company, and he whom thou sawest with me is one of my gang.'

CHAPTER V.

Of the arrival of more Thieves in the Subterranean Habitation, and the agreeable conversation that passed among them.

Signior Rolando had scarce done speaking, when six new faces appeared in the hall; these were the lieutenant with five of the company, who returned loaded with booty, which consisted of two hampers full of sugar, cinnamon, pepper, dried figs, almonds, and raisins. The lieutenant, addressing himself to the captain, told him that he had taken these hampers from a grocer of Benevento, whose mule he had also carried off. When he had given an account of his expedition to his superior, the pillage of the grocer was ordered into the store, and it was unanimously agreed to make merry. A table being covered in the great hall, I was sent back

* The Holy Brotherhood in Spain, called *la Santa Hermandad*, was formerly an association to suppress robbers in times of civil commotion, and at this day is an establishment kept up through all the kingdoms and provinces of Spain for the same purpose.

into the kitchen, were dame Leonarda instructed me in the nature of my office; and yielding to necessity, (since my cruel fate had so ordained) I suppressed my sorrow, and prepared myself for the service of those worthy gentlemen.

My first essay was on the sideboard, which I adorned with silver cups, and many stone bottles of that good wine which Signior Rolando praised so much. I afterwards brought in two ragouts, which were no sooner served than the whole company sat down to eat. They began with a good appetite, while I stood behind ready to supply them with wine, and acquitted myself so handsomely, that I had the honour to be complimented upon my behaviour. The captain recounted my story in a few words, which afforded a good deal of diversion, and afterwards observed, that I did not want merit: but I was at that time cured of my vanity, and could hear myself praised without danger. Not one of them was silent on the subject; they said I seemed born to be their cup-bearer; that I was worth a hundred of my predecessors; and although dame Leonarda (since his death) had been honoured with the office of presenting nectar to these infernal gods, they divested her of that glorious employment in which they installed me, like a young Ganymede succeeding an ancient Hebe.

A great dish of roast meat, served up after the ragouts, finished the repast of those gormandizing thieves; who drinking in proportion to their gluttony soon became frolicksome, made a hellish noise, and spoke all together: one began a story, another broke a jest, a third shouted, a fourth sung; so that there was nothing but riot and confusion. At length Rolando, tired of a

scene in which he was so little regarded, cried, (with a voice that silenced the whole company) 'Gentlemen, I have a proposal to make; instead of stunning one another in this manner, by speaking all together, would it not be better to entertain ourselves like reasonable creatures? There is a thought come into my head: since the time of our association, we have never had the curiosity to know what families we are derived from, and by what train of adventures we have been severally led to embrace this way of life; as these things seem worthy to be known, let us, for our own diversion, communicate them to one another.' The lieutenant, and the rest, as if they had something very entertaining to relate, embraced with great demonstrations of joy the proposal of their chief, who began his own history in these words—

'Gentlemen, you must know that I am the only son of a rich citizen of Madrid; the day of my birth was celebrated in the family by vast rejoicings; my father, pretty well stricken in years, was ravished at sight of an heir, and my mother undertook to suckle me at her own breasts: her father, who was still alive, was a good old man, who meddled with nothing but his beads, and recounted his own warlike exploits, having been many years in the army; so that becoming insensibly the idol of these three persons, I was incessantly dandled in their arms. Lest study should fatigue me in my tender years, I was allowed to spend them in the most childish amusements; my father observing, that children ought not to apply seriously to any thing, until time should have ripened the understanding. In expectation of this maturity, I neither

learned to read nor write, but nevertheless made good use of my time, for my father taught me a thousand different games: I became perfectly acquainted with cards, was no stranger to dice, and my grandfather filled my head with romantic stories of the military expeditions in which he had been concerned. He sung the same catches over and over, and when I had got ten or twelve lines by heart, by dint of hearing them repeated for three months together, my memory became a subject for admiration to my parents, who seemed no less satisfied with my genius. When profiting by the liberty I enjoyed of speaking what came uppermost, I used to interrupt their discourse by my nonsensical prattle, 'Ah! what a charming creature it is!' would my father cry, (looking at me with inexpressible delight) while my mamma overwhelmed me with caresses, and my old grandsire wept with joy. I committed in their presence the most indecent actions with impunity, every thing was forgiven, and in short they adored me. In the mean time, having attained my twelfth year without being put to school, a master was at length provided, but he received precise orders to instruct me without using any violence, being only permitted to threaten me sometimes with a view of inspiring me with awe. This permission had not the most salutary effect upon me, who either laughed at his menaces, or with tears in my eyes went and complained to my mother and grandpapa of his barbarity. It was in vain for the poor devil to deny the accusation; he was looked upon as a tyrant, and my assertion always believed, in spite of his remonstrance. I happened one day to scratch myself, upon which, setting up my

pipes, as if he had flayed me, my mother came running in, and turned my master out of doors, though he protested, and took heaven to witness, that he had not touched my skin.

'In the same manner I got rid of all my preceptors, until such a one as I wanted presented himself: this was a bachelor of Alcala, an excellent tutor of a person of fashion's child! He was a lover of play, women, and wine, consequently the fittest person in the world for me. The first thing he set about was, to gain my affection, in which he succeeded; and by these means gained the love of my parents, who left me entirely to his management: indeed, they had no cause to repent of their confidence; for, in a very little time, he made me perfect in the knowledge of the world. By dint of carrying me along with him, to the places he frequented, I imbibed his taste so well, that, except in Latin, I became a universal proficient; and when I found I had no further occasion for his instructions, he went to offer them elsewhere.

'If, during my childhood, I had lived pretty freely, it was quite another thing when I became master of my own actions: I every moment ridiculed my parents, who did nothing but laugh at my sallies, which were the more agreeable, the more insolence they contained. Meanwhile, I committed all kinds of debauchery, in the company of other young men of the same disposition; and as our parents did not supply us with money sufficient to support such a delicious life, every one pilfered what he could at his own home; but that being also insufficient, we began to rob in the dark; when, unfortunately, the corregidore got notice of us, and would have

caused us to be apprehended, had we not been informed of his treacherous design: upon which we consulted our safety in flight, and transferred the scenes of our exploits to the highway. Since which time, gentlemen, God has given me grace to grow old in my profession, in spite of the dangers to which it is exposed.'

Here the captain left off speaking; and the lieutenant, taking his turn, began with—'Gentlemen, an education quite opposite to that of Signior Rolando has, nevertheless, produced the same effect. My father was a butcher of Toledo, reckoned the greatest brute in the whole city, nor was my mother's disposition much more gentle. While I was a child, they whipped me as if it had been through emulation, at the rate of a thousand stripes a day: the least fault I committed was attended with the most severe chastisement; and it was in vain for me to ask pardon, with tears in my eyes, and protest that I was sorry for what I had done; far from being forgiven, I was often punished without a cause: while my father belaboured me, my mother (as if he had not exerted himself) instead of interceding for her child, frequently came to his assistance. This treatment inspired me with such aversion for my paternal habitation, that I ran away before I had attained my fourteenth year; and taking the road of Arragon, went to Saragossa, subsisting on charity by the way. There I consorted with beggars, who led a pretty comfortable life; they taught me to counterfeit blindness, to appear lame, and afflict my limbs with fictitious ulcers, &c. In the morning (like players, who disguise themselves in order to appear upon the stage) we prepared ourselves for the

different parts we intended to act, and every one ran to his post: in the evening we met again, and enjoyed ourselves all night, at the expense of those who had compassion on us in the day. Tired, however, of living among those wretches, and ambitious of appearing in a higher sphere, I associated myself with some knights of the post, who taught me a great many stratagems; but we were, in a very short time, obliged to quit Saragossa, having quarrelled with a certain justice, whose protection we had enjoyed. Every one took his own course: for my own part, I engaged myself in a company of brave fellows, who put travellers under contribution; and liked their manner of living so well, that hitherto I have never felt the least inclination to seek another. I am, therefore, gentlemen, very much obliged to the barbarity of my parents; for had they treated me a little less savagely, instead of being an honourable lieutenant, I should have been, doubtless, at this day, a miserable butcher.'

The next that spoke was a young thief; who, sitting between the captain and lieutenant, said, 'Gentlemen, the stories we have heard are neither so complicated nor so curious as mine: I owe my being to a peasant's wife, who lived in the neighbourhood of Seville: three weeks after she had brought me into the world, (being still young, handsome, and healthy,) it was proposed to her to nurse a man of quality's only son, lately born in Seville. This proposal my mother cheerfully accepted, and went to fetch the child; which being committed to her care, she no sooner brought it home to her house, than perceiving some small resemblance between us, she was tempted to make me pass for the infant of

quality, in hopes that she should one day be well rewarded by me for that kind office: my father, who was not more scrupulous than his neighbours, approved of the deceit; so that, after having made us exchange our swaddling-clothes, the son of Don Rodrigo de Herrera was sent to another nurse under my name, and my mother suckled me under his.

'Notwithstanding all the fine things that are said of instinct, and the force of blood, the little gentleman's parents swallowed the change with great ease: they had not the least suspicion of the trick that was played upon them; for, till I was seven years old, I was scarce ever out of their arms. Their intention being to make a complete cavalier, all sorts of masters were provided; but I had no great inclination for the exercises I learned, and still less relish for the sciences they explained. I loved much better to game with the servants, for whose company I frequented the kitchen and stable: but play was not long my predominant passion; for before I was seventeen years of age, I got drunk daily, seduced all the women in the house, but attached myself chiefly to the cook-maid, who seemed to merit my principal regard: she was a fat jolly wench, whose pleasantry and sleekness pleased me much; and I made love to her with so little circumspection, that Don Rodrigo himself perceived it. He reprimanded me sharply; reproached me with the baseness of my inclinations; and, lest the sight of this amiable object should render his remonstrances ineffectual, turned my princess out of doors.

'I was disgusted at this piece of conduct, for which I was resolved to be revenged: with this

view, I stole his lady's jewels, and running in quest of my fair Helen, who had retired to the house of a washerwoman of her acquaintance, I carried her off at noon-day, to the end that nobody might be ignorant of my passion. That was not all: I conducted her into her own country, where I married her in a solemn manner, that I might not only give Herrera the more vexation, but also afford such a worthy example to the children of noblemen. Three months after my marriage, I was informed of Don Rodrigo's death; a piece of news I did not receive with indifference; but repairing instantly to Seville, in order to demand his estate, I found things strangely altered! My mother, who was dead, had been silly enough, on her death-bed, to confess the whole affair, in presence of the curate of the village, and other credible witnesses; in consequence of which, the true son of Don Rodrigo was already in possession of my place, or rather of his own; and had been received with the more joy, on account of their being dissatisfied with me. Wherefore, having nothing to expect from that quarter, and no longer feeling my inclination for my fat spouse, I joined some gentlemen of the road, with whom I began my expeditions.'

The young robber having ended his story, another informed us, that he was the son of a merchant at Burgos, and, prompted by an inconsiderate devotion, had taken the habit, and professed a very austere order, from which, in a few years, he apostatized. In short, those eight highwaymen spoke in their turns; and when I had heard them all, I was not at all surprised to find them together. The discourse was after-

warus changed; they brought upon the carpet several projects for their next excursions, and after having come to a determination, got up from the table, in order to go to rest. Having lighted their wax candles, and withdrawn, I followed Captain Rolando into his chamber, where while I helped to undress him, 'Well, Gil Blas,' says he, 'thou seest how we live; we are always merry, and hatred and envy never get footing among us: we never have the least quarrel with one another, but are more united than a convent of monks; thou wilt, my child,' pursued he, 'lead a very agreeable life in this place; for I don't believe thee fool enough to boggle at living with robbers. Eh! dost thou think there are any honester people in the world than we? No, my lad, every one loves to prey upon his fellows: it is a universal principle, though variously exerted. Conquerers (for example) seize upon the territories of their neighbours: people of quality borrow without any intention of repaying; bankers, treasurers, exchange-brokers, clerks, and all kinds of merchants, great and small, are not a whit more conscientious. As for your limbs of the law, I need not mention them; every body knows what they can do: I must own, however, that they are somewhat more humane than we; for we often put innocent people to death, and they sometimes save the lives of the guilty.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the attempt of Gil Blas to make his escape, and the success thereof.

When the captain of the thieves had made this apology for his profession, he went to bed, and I returned into the hall, where I uncovered the table, and put every thing in order: from thence I went into the kitchen, where Domingo (so was the old negro called) expected me to supper. Though I had no appetite, I sat down with them; but as I could not eat, and appeared as melancholy as I had cause to be so, these two apparitions, equally qualified, undertook to give me consolation. 'Why do you afflict yourself, child?' said the old lady: 'you ought rather to rejoice at your good fortune. You are young, and seem to be of an easy temper; consequently would have been, in a little time, lost in the world: there you would have fallen into the hands of libertines, who would have engaged you in all manner of debauchery; whereas, here your innocence finds a secure haven.'—'Dame Leonarda is in the right,' said the old black-a-moor, with great gravity; 'and let me add, the world is full of affliction: thank heaven, therefore, my friend, for having delivered thee all at once from the dangers, difficulties, and misery of life.'

I bore their discourse with patience, because to fret myself would have done me no service: at

last Domingo, having eaten and drank plentifully, retired into the stable; while Leonarda, with a lamp in her hand, conducted me into a vault, which served as a burying place to the robbers who died a natural death, and in which I perceived a miserable truckle-bed, that looked more like a tomb than a couch: 'Here is your bedchamber,' said she: 'the lad, whose place you have the good fortune to supply, slept here, as long as he lived amongst us; and now that he is dead, rests in the same place. He slipped away in the flower of his age: I hope you will not be so simple as to follow his example.' So saying, she put the light into my hand, and returned into the kitchen; while I, setting the lamp upon the ground, threw myself upon the bed, not so much in expectation of enjoying the least repose, as with a view to indulge my melancholy reflections. 'O heavens!' cried I, 'was ever destiny so terrible as mine! I am banished from the sight of the sun; and, as if it was not enough to be buried alive at the age of eighteen, I am moreover condemned to serve thieves, to spend the day among highwaymen, and the night among the dead!' I wept bitterly over these suggestions, which seeemed to me, and were, in effect, extremely shocking. A thousand times I cursed my uncle's design of sending me to Salamanca: I repented of my flying from justice at Cacabelos, and even wished I had submitted to the torture. But recollecting that I consumed myself in vain complaints to no purpose, I began to think of some means by which I might escape. 'What,' said I to myself, 'is it then impossible to deliver myself! the thieves are asleep; the cook-maid and negro will be in the same condition present-

ly; cannot I while they are all quiet, by the help of my lamp, find out the passage through which I descended into this infernal abode? It is true, indeed, I don't think myself strong enough to lift the trap-door that covers the entry; but, however, that I may have nothing to reproach myself with, I will try; my despair may perhaps supply me with strength, and who knows but I may accomplish it!'

Having then projected this great design, I got up, when I imagined Leonarda and Domingo were at rest; and taking the lamp in my hand, went out to the vault, recommending myself to all the saints in heaven. It was not without great difficulty that I found again all the windings of this new labyrinth, and arrived at the door of the stable; where, at last, perceiving the passage I was in search of, I went into it, advancing toward the trap, with as much nimbleness as joy: but, alas! in the middle of the entry, I met with a cursed iron gate, fast locked, and consisting of strong bars, so close to one another, that I could scarce thrust my hand between them. I was confounded at the sight of this new obstacle, which I had not observed when I came in, the grate being then open: I did not fail, however, to feel the bars and examine the lock, which I even attempted to force; when, all of a sudden, I felt across my shoulders, five or six lusty thwacks with a bull's pizzle; upon which I uttered such a dreadful yell, that the whole cavern echoed with the sound; and looking behind me, perceived the old negro in his shirt, with a dark lantern in one hand, and the instrument of his execution in the other. 'Ah, ha! Mr. Jackanapes,' said he, 'you want to make

your escape, hah! You must not imagine that I am to be caught napping. I heard you all the while. I suppose you thought the grate was open, did'nt you? Know, my boy, that henceforth thou shalt always find it shut, and that when we detain any body here against his inclination, he must be more cunning than thou if ever he gets off.'

In the mean time two or three of the thieves starting out of their sleep at the noise of my cries, and believing that the holy brotherhood was coming souse upon them, got up in a hurry and alarmed their companions. In an instant all were a-foot, and seizing their swords and carbines, advanced half naked to the place where Domingo chastised me; but they no sooner understood the cause of the noise they had heard, than their uneasiness was changed into fits of laughter. 'How, Gil Blas!' said the apostate thief to me, 'thou hast not been here six hours and wantest to take thy leave of us already! Sure thou must have a great aversion to a retired life, hah! What would'st thou do if thou wert a Carthusian friar? Go to bed; thou art quit for once on account of the stripes Domingo has bestowed on thee, but if ever thou should'st make another effort to escape, by St. Bartholomew! we will flay thee alive!' This said, he withdrew; the other thieves retired into their apartments; the old negro, proud of his exploit, returned into his stable, and I sneaked back to my Golgotha, where I spent the remaining part of the night in sighs and tears.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the behaviour of Gil Blas when he could do no better.

During the first days of my captivity, I was like to sink under the sorrow that oppressed me, and might have been said to die by inches; but at last my good genius inspired me with the resolution to dissemble; I affected to appear less sad than usual, I began to laugh and sing, though God knows with an aching heart. In a word, I counterfeited so well, that Leonarda and Domingo were deceived, and believed that the bird was at last reconciled to his cage. The robbers were of the same opinion; for I assumed a gay air when I filled wine for them, and mingled in their conversation whenever I found an opportunity of acting the buffoon. This freedom, far from displeasing, afforded them diversion. 'Gil Blas,' said the captain to me one evening while I entertained them in this manner, 'thou hast done well, my lad, to banish this melancholy; I am charmed with thy wit and humour. I find people are not known all at once, for I did not think thou hadst been so sprightly and good natured.'

The rest joined also in my praise, and appeared so well satisfied with me, that taking the advantage of this good disposition, 'Gentlemen,' said I, 'allow me to tell my mind: since my abode in this place, I find myself quite another sort of

a person than heretofore. You have divested me of the prejudices of education, and I insensibly imbibe your disposition. I have a taste for your profession, and a longing desire of being honoured with the name of your companion, and of sharing the dangers of your expeditions.' All the company approved of my discourse, and commended my forwardness; so that it was unanimously resolved, to let me serve a little longer, in order to approve myself worthy, then carry me out in their excursions; after which I should obtain the honourable place I demanded.

Well, then, I was obliged to persist in my dissimulation, and exercise the post of cup-bearer still, a circumstance that mortified me extremely, for my design in aspiring to the honour of becoming a thief, was only to have the liberty of taking the air with the rest, in hopes that one day I should be able to escape from them in the course of their expeditions. This hope alone supported my life, but nevertheless appeared so distant, that I tried more than once to baffle the vigilance of Domingo, though it was never in my power, he being always so much upon his guard, that I would have defied a hundred Orpheuses to charm such a Cerberus. It is true, indeed, I did not do all that I could have done to beguile him, lest I should have wakened his suspicion, for he had a hawk's eye over me, and I was obliged to act with the utmost circumspection, that I might not betray myself. I therefore resigned myself to my fate until the time should be expired that was prescribed by the robbers for receiving me into their gang, and this event I expected as impatiently as if I had been to be enrolled in a list of commissioners.

Heaven be praised! in six months that time arrived, when Signior Rolando, addressing himself to his company, said, 'Gentlemen, we must keep our word with Gil Blas: I have no bad opinion of that young fellow, and I hope we shall make something of him; it is therefore my opinion, that we carry him along with us to-morrow to gather laurels on the highway, and usher him into the path of glory.' The robbers agreed to their captain's proposal; and to show that they already looked upon me as one of their companions, from that moment dispensed with my service, and re-established Dame Leonarda in the office she had lost on my account. They made me throw away my habit, that consisted of a sorry threadbare short cassock, and dressed me in the spoils of a gentleman whom they had lately robbed; after which I prepared myself for my first campaign.

CHAPTER VIII.

Gil Blas accompanies the Thieves, and performs an exploit on the highway.

It was in the month of September, when toward the close of the night I came out of the cavern in company with the robbers, armed like them with a carbine, two pistols, sword and bayonet, and mounted on a pretty good horse which they had taken from the same gentleman whose dress I wore. I had lived so long in darkness, that when day broke I was dazzled with the light, which, however, soon became familiar to my eyes.

Having passed hard by Ponferrada, we lay in ambush in a small wood which bordered on the road to Leon. There we waited, expecting that fortune would throw some good luck in our way, when we perceived a Dominican (contrary to the custom of these good fathers) riding upon a sorry mule: 'God be praised,' cried the captain, laughing, 'there's the *coup d'essai* of Gil Blas, let him go and unload that monk, while we observe his behaviour.' All the rest were of opinion that this was a very proper commission for me, and exhorted me to acquit myself handsomely in it. 'Gentlemen,' said I, 'you shall be satisfied, I will make that priest as bare as my hand, and bring hither his mule in a twinkling.—'No, no,' replied Rolando, 'she is not worth the trouble, bring us only the purse of his reverence, that is all we expect of thee.' For this purpose I sallied from the wood, and made toward the clergyman, begging Heaven all the way to pardon the action I was about to commit. I would gladly have made my escape that moment, but the greatest part of the thieves were better mounted than I, and had they perceived me running away, would have been at my heels in an instant, and entrapt me again in a very short time, or perhaps discharged their carbines at me, in which case I should have nothing to brag of. Not daring, therefore, to hazard such a delicate step, I came up with the priest, and clapping a pistol to his breast, demanded his purse. He stopped short to survey me, and without seeming much afraid, 'Child,' said he, 'you are very young, you have got a bad trade by the hand betimes.' 'Bad as it is, father,' I replied, 'I wish I had begun it sooner.'—'Ah! son, son,' said the good

friar, (who did not comprehend the true meaning of my words) 'what blindness! allow me to represent to you the miserable condition'—'O, father,' said I, interrupting him hastily, 'a truce with your morals if you please! my business on the highway is not to hear sermons: I want money.'—'Money!' cried he with an air of astonishment, 'you are little acquainted with the charity of the Spaniards, if you think people of my cloth have occasion for money while they travel in this kingdom. Undeceive yourself; we are every where cheerfully received, having lodging and victuals, and nothing is asked in return but our prayers: in short, we never carry money about us on the road, but confide altogether in Providence.'—'That won't go down with me,' I replied, 'your dependance is not altogether so visionary, for you have always some good pistoles in reserve to make more sure of Providence. But my good father,' added I, 'let us have done, my comrades who are in that wood begin to be impatient, therefore throw your purse upon the ground instantly, or I shall certainly put you to death.'

At these words, which I uttered with a menacing look, the friar, seeming afraid of his life, said, 'Hold! I will satisfy you then, since there is a necessity for it: I see tropes and figures have no effect on people of your profession.' So saying, he pulled from underneath his gown a large purse of shamoy leather, which he dropped upon the ground. Then I told him he might continue his journey, a permission he did not give me the least trouble of repeating, but he clapped his heels to the sides of his mule, which belying the opinion I had conceived of her, (for

I imagined she was not much better than my uncle's) all of a sudden went off at a pretty round pace. As soon as he was at a distance, I alighted, and taking up the purse, which seemed heavy, mounted again and got back to the wood in a trice, where the thieves waited with impatience to congratulate me upon my victory. Scarce would they give me time to dismount, so eager were they to embrace me. 'Courage, Gil Blas!' said Rolando, 'thou hast done wonders, I have had my eyes on thee during thy expedition, I have observed thy countenance all the time, and I prophesy thou wilt in time become an excellent highwayman.' The lieutenant and the rest approved of the prediction, which they assured me I should one day certainly fulfil. I thanked them for the high idea they had conceived of me, and promised to do all that lay in my power to maintain it.

After they had loaded me with so much undeserved praise, they were desirous of examining the booty I had made. 'Come,' said they, 'let us see what there is in the clergyman's purse.'—'It ought to be well furnished,' continued one among them, 'for these good fathers don't travel like pilgrims.' The captain untied the purse, and pulled out two or three handfulls of copper medals, mixed with bits of hallowed wax, and some scapularies.* At the sight of such an uncommon prey, all the robbers burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. 'Upon my soul,' cried the lieutenant, 'we are very much obliged to Gil Blas,

* Scapularies are pieces of consecrated stuff worn by priests and nuns.

for having in his *coup d'essai* performed a theft so salutary to the company.' This piece of wit brought on more. Those miscreants, and he in particular who had apostatized, began to be very merry upon the matter, a thousand sallies escaped them that too well denoted their immorality. I was the only person who did not laugh, my mirth being checked by the raillers, who enjoyed themselves at my expense. Every one having shot his bolt, the captain said to me, 'In faith, Gil Blas, I advise thee as a friend, to joke no more with monks, who are, generally speaking, too arch and cunning for such as thee.'

CHAPTER IX.

Of the serious affair that followed this adventure.

We remained in the wood the greatest part of the day, without perceiving any traveller that could make amends for the priest. At last we left it in order to return to our cavern, confining our exploits to that ludicrous event which still constituted the subject of our discourse, when we discovered at a distance a coach drawn by four mules, advancing at a brisk trot, and escorted by three men on horseback, who seemed well armed. Upon this Rolando ordered his troop to halt, and held a counsel, the result of which was, that they should attack the coach. We were immediately arranged according to his disposition, and marched up to it in order of battle. In spite of the applause I had acquired in the wood, I felt myself seized with a universal

tremor, and immediately a cold sweat broke out all over my body, which I looked upon as no very favourable omen. To crown my good luck I was in the front of the line, between the captain and lieutenant, who had stationed me there that I might accustom myself to stand fire all at once. Rolando, observing how much nature suffered within me, looked at me askance, saying, with a fierce countenance, 'Hark'e, Gil Blas, remember to do thy duty, for if thou hang'st an arse I'll blow thy brains out.' I was too well persuaded that he would keep his word to neglect this caution, for which reason I thought of nothing now but of recommending my soul to God.

In the mean time the coach and horsemen approached, who knowing what sort of people we were, and guessing our designs by our appearance, stopped within musket-shot and prepared to receive us, while a gentleman of a good mien and richly dressed came out of the coach, and mounting a horse that was led by one of his attendants, put himself at their head without any other arms than a sword and a pair of pistols. Though they were but four against nine, (the coachman remaining on the seat) they advanced toward us with a boldness that redoubled my fear: I did not fail, however, though I trembled in every joint, to make ready to fire, but to tell the truth, I shut my eyes and turned away my head when I discharged my carbine, and considering the manner in which it went off, my conscience ought to be acquitted on that score.

I will not attempt to describe the action, for although I was present I saw nothing, and my fear, in confounding my imagination, concealed from me the horror of the spectacle that occa-

sioned it. All I know of the matter is, that after a great noise of firing, I heard my companions shout and cry, 'Victory! Victory!' At that exclamation, the terror which had taken possession of my senses dissipated, and I saw the four horsemen stretched lifeless on the field of battle. On our side we had but one man killed, and he was no other than the apostate, who had met with his deserts for his apostasy and profane jests upon the scapularies. The lieutenant received a wound in the arm, but it was a very slight one, the shot having only ruffled the skin.

Signior Rolando ran immediately to the door of the coach, in which there was a lady of about four or five and twenty years of age, who appeared very handsome, notwithstanding the melancholy condition in which she was, for she had swooned during the engagement, and was not yet recovered. While he was busied in looking after her we took care of the booty, beginning with securing the horses of the killed, which, frighted at the noise of the firing, had run away after having lost their riders. As for the mules, they had not stirred, although the coachman during the action had quitted his place in order to make his escape. We alighted, and unyoking, loaded them with some trunks we found fastened to the coach, before and behind. This being done, the lady, who had not as yet recovered her senses, was by order of the captain taken out, and placed on horseback before one of the robbers that was best mounted; after which, quitting the high road, the coach, and the dead, whom we had stripped, we carried off the lady, the mules, and the horses.

CHAPTER X.

In what manner the Robbers behaved to the Lady Of the great design which Gil Blas projected, and the issue thereof.

It was within an hour of day-break when we arrived at our habitation, and the first thing we did was to lead our beasts into the stable, where we were obliged to tie them to the rack and take care of them with our own hands, the old negro having been three days before seized with a fit of the gout and rheumatism, that kept him a-bed deprived of the use of his limbs: the only member at liberty was his tongue, which he employed in testifying his impatience by the most horrible execrations. Leaving this miserable wretch to swear and blaspheme, we went to the kitchen, where our whole attention was engrossed by the lady, and we succeeded so well as to bring her out of her fit; but when she had recovered the use of her senses, and saw herself in the hands of several men whom she did not know, she perceived her misfortune, and was seized with horror! The most lively sorrow and direful despair appeared in her eyes, which she lifted up to heaven, as if to reproach it with the indignities that threatened her; then giving way of a sudden to these dismal apprehensions, she relapsed into a swoon, her eyelids closed, and the robbers imagined that death would deprive them of their prey. The captain thinking it

more proper to leave her to herself than to torment her with their assistance, ordered her to be carried to Leonarda's bed, where she was left alone at the hazard of what might happen.

We repaired to the hall, where one of the thieves, who had been bred a surgeon, dressed the lieutenant's wound: after which, being desirous of seeing what was in the trunks, we found some of them filled with lace and linen, others with clothes, and the last we opened contained some bags full of pistoles, at sight of which, the gentlemen concerned were infinitely rejoiced. This inquiry being made, the cook-maid furnished the side-board, laid the cloth, and served up supper. Our conversation at first turned upon the great victory we had obtained, and Rolando addressing himself to me, 'Confess, Gil Blas,' said he, 'confess that thou wast horribly afraid.' I ingenuously owned what he said was very true, but that when I should have made two or three campaigns, I would fight like a knight-errant: whereupon the whole company took my part, observing that my fear was excusable, that the action had been very hot, and that, considering I was a young fellow who had never smelled gunpowder, I had acquitted myself pretty well.

The discourse afterward turning upon the mules and horses we had brought into our retreat, it was agreed that to-morrow before day we should all set out together, in order to sell them at Mansilla, which place, in all probability, the report of our expedition had not yet reached. This resolution being taken, we finished our meal, and returned into the kitchen to visit the lady, whom we found still in the same situation.

Nevertheless, though it was with difficulty we could perceive any signs of life in her, some of the villains did not scruple to regard her with a profane eye, and even to discover a brutal desire, which they would have satisfied immediately had not Rolando prevented it, by representing to them, that they ought at least to wait until the lady should get the better of that oppression of sorrow which deprived her of reflection. The respect they had for their captain restrained their incontinence, otherwise nothing could have saved the lady, whose honour death itself, perhaps, would not have been able to secure.

We left this unfortunate gentlewoman in the same condition in which we found her, Rolando contenting himself with laying injunctions on Leonarda to take care of her, while every one retired into his own apartment. For my own part, as soon as I got to bed, instead of resigning myself to sleep, I did nothing but think of that lady's misfortune: I never doubted that she was a person of quality, and looked upon her situation as the more deplorable for that reason I could not, without shuddering, represent to myself the horrors to which she was destined, and felt myself as deeply concerned for her as if I had been attached by blood or friendship. At last, after having bewailed her hard fate, I began to revolve the means of rescuing her honour from the danger in which it was, and of delivering myself at the same time from the subterranean abode. I recollected that the old negro was not in a condition to move, and that since his being taken ill the cook-wench kept the key of the grate. This reflection warmed my imagination, and made me conceive a scheme which I digested

so well, that I proceeded to put it into practice immediately in the following manner.

Pretending to be racked with the colic, I began with complaints and groans, then raising my voice, uttered dreadful cries that wakened the robbers and brought them instantly to my bedside. When they asked what made me roar so hideously, I answered that I was tortured with a horrible colic, and the better to persuade them of the truth of what I said, grinded my teeth, made frightful grimaces and contortions, and writhed myself in a strange manner, then I became quiet all of a sudden as if my pains had given me some respite. In a moment after I began again to bounce upon the bed and twist about my limbs, in a word, I played my part so well, that the thieves, cunning as they were, allowed themselves to be deceived, and believed in good earnest that I was violently griped. In a moment all of them were busied in endeavours to ease me: one brought a bottle of usquebaugh and made me swallow one half of it; another in spite of my teeth injected a clyster of oil of sweet almonds; a third warmed a napkin and applied it broiling hot to my belly. I roared for mercy in vain, they imputed my cries to the colic, and continued to make me suffer real pains, in attempting to free me from one I did not feel. At last, being able to resist them no longer, I was fain to tell them that the gripes had left me, and to conjure them to give me quarter. Upon which they left off tormenting me with their remedies, and I took care to trouble them no more with my complaints, for fear of undergoing their good offices a second time.

This scene lasted almost three hours, after

which the robbers judging that day was not far off, prepared themselves to set out for Manzilla: I would have got up to make them believe I was desirous of accompanying them, but they would not suffer me to rise, Signior Rolando saying, 'No, no, Gil Blas! stay at home, child, thy colic may return. Thou shalt go with us another time, but thou art in no condition to go abroad to-day.' I was afraid of insisting upon it too much, lest they should yield to my request, therefore I only appeared very much mortified because I could not be of the party. This I acted so naturally, that they went out of the cavern without the least suspicion of my design. After their departure, which I had endeavoured to hasten by my prayers, I said to myself, 'Now, Gil Blas! now is the time for thee to have resolution: arm thyself with courage to finish that which thou hast so happily begun. Domingo is not in a condition to oppose thy enterprise, and Leonarda cannot hinder its execution. Seize this opportunity of escaping, than which, perhaps, thou wilt never find one more favourable.' These suggestions filled me with confidence, I got up, took my sword and pistols, and went first toward the kitchen, but before I entered, hearing Leonarda speaking, stopped in order to listen. She was talking to the unknown lady, who having recovered her senses, and understood the whole of her misfortune, weeped in the utmost bitterness of despair. 'Weep, my child,' said the old beldame to her, 'dissolve yourself into tears, and don't spare sighs, for that will give you ease. You have had a dangerous qualm, but now there is nothing to fear, since you shed abundance of tears. Your grief will abate by little and little,

and you will soon accustom yourself to live with our gentlemen, who are men of honour. You will be treated like a princess, meet with nothing but complaisance, and fresh proofs of affection every day. There are a great many women who would be glad to be in your place.'

I did not give Leonarda time to proceed, but entering, clapped a pistol to her breast, and with a threatening look, commanded her to surrender the key of the grate. She was confounded at my behaviour, and though almost at the end of her career, so much attached to life, that she durst not refuse my demand. Having got the key in my possession, I addressed myself to the afflicted lady, saying, 'Madam, heaven has sent you a deliverer, rise and follow me, and I will conduct you whithersoever you shall please to direct.' The lady did not remain deaf to my words, which made such an impression upon her, that summoning up all the strength she had left, she got up, and throwing herself at my feet, conjured me to preserve her honour. I raised her, and assured her that she might rely upon me; then taking some cords which I perceived in the kitchen, with her assistance, I tied Leonarda to the feet of a large table, swearing that if she opened her mouth I would kill her on the spot. I afterwards lighted a flambeau, and going with the stranger into the room where the gold and silver was deposited, filled my pockets with pistoles and double pistoles, and to induce the lady to follow my example, assured her that she only took back her own. When we had made a good provision of this kind, we went toward the stable, which I entered alone with my pistols cocked, firmly believing that the old negro, in spite of his

gout and rheumatism, would not suffer me to saddle and bridle my horse in quiet, and fully resolved to cure him of all his distempers, if he should take it in his head to be troublesome: but by good luck, he was so overwhelmed with the pains he had undergone, and those he still suffered, that I brought my horse out of the stable, even without his seeming to perceive it, and the lady waiting for me at the door, we threaded with all despatch the passage that led out of the cavern, arrived at the grate, which we opened, and at last came to the trap door, which we lifted up with great difficulty, or rather the desire of escaping lent us new strength, without which we should not have been able to succeed.

Day began to appear just as we found ourselves delivered from the jaws of this abyss, and as we fervently desired to be at a greater distance from it, I threw myself into the saddle, the lady mounting behind me, and following the first path that presented itself, at a round gallop got out of the forest in a short time, and entered a plain divided by several roads, one of which we took at random. I was mortally afraid that it would conduct us to Mansilla, where we might meet with Rolando and his confederates, but happily my fear was vain. We arrived at the town of Astorga at two o'clock in the afternoon, where people gazed at us with extreme attention, as if it had been an extraordinary thing to see a woman on horseback sitting behind a man. We alighted at the first inn we came to, where the first thing I did was to order a partridge and a young rabbit to the fire; and while this was a doing I conducted the lady into a chamber, where we began to converse with one another, for we had rode so fast that we had no dis-

course upon the road. She showed how sensible she was of the service I had done to her, and observed, that after I had performed such a generous action, she could not persuade herself that I was a companion of the thieves from whom I had rescued her. I told her my story, in order to confirm the good opinion she had conceived of me, and by that means engaged her to honour me with her confidence, and inform me of her misfortunes, which she recounted as I shall relate in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

The history of Donna Mencia of Mosquera.

'I WAS born at Valladolid, and my name is Donna Mencia of Mosquera. Don Martin, my father, after having spent almost his whole patrimony in the service of his king, was killed in Portugal at the head of his own regiment, and left me so moderately provided, that though I was an only child, I was far from being an advantageous match. I did not want admirers, however; in spite of the lowness of my fortune, a good many of the most considerable cavaliers in Spain made their addresses to me, but he who attracted my attention most, was Don Alvaro de Mello; he was indeed more handsome than any of his rivals, but more substantial qualifications determined me in his favour; he was endued with wit, prudence, probity, and valour, and withal the most gallant man in the world. When he gave entertainments, nothing could be more elegant; and when he ap

peared at tournaments, every body admired his vigour and address: I preferred him, therefore, to all others, and married him accordingly.

'A few days after our marriage he happened to meet with Don Andrea de Baesa, who had been one of his rivals, in a private place, where quarrelling with each other they came to blows, and Don Andrea lost his life in the rencounter. As he was nephew to the corregidor of Valladolid, a violent man, and mortal enemy to the family of Mello, Don Alvaro knew he could not leave the city too soon; he returned home in a hurry, and while they saddled his horse told me what had happened. "My dear Mencia," said he, "we must part! you know the corregidor, don't let us then flatter ourselves, for he will prosecute me with the utmost rancour, and as you are not ignorant of his credit, you know I cannot be safe in this kingdom." He was so much penetrated with his own sorrow, and with that which he saw take possession of my breast, that he could say no more, and when I had prevailed upon him to furnish himself with some money and jewels, he clasped me in his arms, and during a whole quarter of an hour we did nothing but mingle our sighs and tears. At last, being told the horse was ready he tore himself from me; he departed, and left me in a condition not to be described. Happy! had the excess of my affliction at that time put an end to my life! what troubles and sorrows would my death have prevented! Some hours after Don Alvaro was gone, the corregidor being informed of his flight, ordered him to be pursued, and spared nothing to have him in his power: but my husband always baffled the pursuit, and kept himself secure in such a manner, that the judge

found himself obliged to limit his revenge to the sole satisfaction of ruining the fortune of a man whose blood he wanted to shed: his efforts were not unsuccessful, all the effects of Don Alvaro being confiscated.

'Left in a most afflicting situation, and having scarce wherewithal to subsist, I began to live a very solitary life, all my attendants being reduced to one servant maid: I spent the day in bemoaning—not an indigence which I could have borne with patience, but the absence of my dear husband, whose condition I was utterly ignorant of, although he had promised in his last melancholy adieu, that he would take care to inform me of his lot, into whatever part of the world his cruel fate should conduct him. Nevertheless seven long years elapsed without my hearing the least account of him, and this uncertainty of his destiny plunged me into an abyss of sorrow! At last I was told that, in fighting for the King of Portugal in Fez, he had lost his life in battle: a man lately returned from Africa confirmed this report, assuring me that he was perfectly well acquainted with Don Alvaro de Mello, had served with him in the Portuguese army, and even saw him fall in the action: to this he added many other circumstances, which persuaded me that my husband was no more.

'At that time Don Ambrosio Mesia Carillo, Marquis of Guardia, came to Valladolid: he was one of those old lords who, by the politeness and gallantry of their manners, make people forget their age, and continue still agreeable to the ladies. One day hearing by accident the story of Don Alvaro, and being desirous of seeing me, on account of the picture which had been drawn of

me, for the satisfaction of his curiosity, he engaged one of my relations, who carried me to her house. Seeing me there, I had the fortune to please him in spite of the remarkable impression which grief had made on my countenance; but why do I say in spite of it! perhaps he was touched alone by my sad and languishing air, which prepossessed him in favour of my fidelity; his love, in all probability, was the effect of my melancholy, for he told me more than once, that he regarded me as a miracle of constancy, and that for this reason he even envied the fate of my husband, how deplorable soever it was in other respects: in a word, he was struck at sight of me, and had no occasion to see me a second time in order to take the resolution of making me his wife.

He chose the intercession of my kinswoman towards the obtaining of my consent; she came to my lodgings accordingly, and represented to me, that my husband having ended his days in the kingdom of Fez, as we had been informed, it was not reasonable that I should bury my charms any longer, that I had sufficiently bewailed the fate of a man with whom I had been united but a few moments, and that I ought to profit by the occasion that now presented itself, by which means I should be the happiest woman in the world. Then she extolled the great family of the old marquis, his vast estate and unblemished character: but her eloquence in displaying the advantages he possessed was in vain; it was not in her power to persuade me, not that I doubted the death of Don Alvaro, or was restrained by the fear of seeing him again, when I should least expect him; the little inclination, or rather the reluctance, I felt for a second marriage, after having

suffered so many misfortunes by my first, was the only obstacle my relation had to remove. She did not despair for all that; on the contrary it redoubled her zeal for Don Ambrosio, she engaged my whole family in the interests of that lord; my relations pressed me to accept of such an advantageous match; I was every moment besieged, importuned, and tormented, and my misery, which daily increased, contributed not a little to overcome my resistance.

'Being unable, therefore, to hold out any longer, I yielded to their pressing instances, and married the Marquis of Guardia, who the day after our nuptials carried me to a very fine castle which he had, situated near Burgos, between Grajal and Rodillas. He conceived the most violent passion for me, and I observed in the whole of his behaviour, the utmost desire of pleasing me. His sole study was to anticipate my wishes: no husband had ever such a tender regard for his wife, and no lover ever showed more complaisance to his mistress. I should have been passionately fond of Don Ambrosio, notwithstanding the disproportion of our years, had I been capable of loving any one after Don Alvaro, but a constant heart can never change. The endeavours of my second husband to please me, were rendered ineffectual by the remembrance of my first, so that I could only requite his tenderness with pure sentiments of gratitude.

'I was in this disposition when one day taking the air at the window of my apartment, I perceived in the garden a kind of peasant who earnestly looked at me: thinking he was the gardener's servant I took no notice of him; but next day being again at the window I saw him in the

same place, and he seemed to view me with uncommon attention: struck with this circumstance, I looked at him in my turn, and after having some time considered him, thought I recognised the features of the unfortunate Don Alvaro! This apparition raised an inconceivable tumult within me, I shrieked aloud! but luckily there was nobody present except Inez, who, of all my servants, enjoyed the greatest share of my confidence. When I imparted to her the suspicion that alarmed me, she laughed at my apprehension, believing that my eyes were imposed upon by some slight resemblance. "Recollect yourself, madam," said she, "and don't imagine you have seen your former husband: what likelihood is there that he should be here in the dress of a peasant? or indeed what probability is there of his being alive? I will go down into the garden," added she, "and talk to this countryman, and when I have learned who he is, come back and let you know." Inez accordingly went into the garden, and soon after returned to my apartment in great emotion, saying, "Madam, your suspicion is but too just! it is Don Alvaro himself whom you have seen! he has discovered himself, and demands a secret interview."

'As I had at that very time an opportunity of receiving Don Alvaro, the marquis being at Burgos, I ordered my maid to bring him into my closet by a private stair-case. You may well think that I was in a terrible agitation, and altogether unable to support the presence of a man who had a right to load me with reproaches. As soon as he appeared I fainted away. Inez and he flew to my assistance, and when they had brought me out of my swoon, Don Alvaro said, "Madam

for heaven's sake compose yourself, let not my presence be a punishment to you, I have no intention to give you the least pain. I come not as a furious husband to call you to an account of your plighted troth, and upbraid you with the second engagement you have contracted. I know very well that it was the work of your relations, I am acquainted with all the persecutions you have suffered on that score; besides, the report of my death was spread all over Valladolid, and you have had the more reason to believe it true, as no letter from me assured you of the contrary; in short, I know in what manner you have lived since our cruel separation, and that necessity, rather than love, has thrown you into the arms of——" "Ah, sir!" cried I, interrupting him, "why will you excuse your unhappy wife! she is criminal, since you live! why am I not still in that miserable situation in which I lived before I gave my hand to Don Ambrosio! Fatal nuptials! I should then at least have had the consolation in my misery to see you again without a blush!"

"My dear Mencia!" replied Don Alvaro with a look that testified how much he was affected by my tears, "I do not complain, and far from reproaching you with the splendid condition in which I find you, by all my hopes I thank heaven for it! Since the melancholy day of my departure from Valladolid, fate has been always adverse, and my life but a chain of misfortunes; and to crown my misery, it was never in my power to let you hear from me! Too confident of your love, I incessantly represented to myself the condition to which my fatal tenderness had reduced you. My imagination painted Donna Mencia in her tears! you was the greatest of all my misfor-

tunes, and sometimes, I must confess, I have looked upon myself as a criminal in having had the good fortune to please you: I have wished that your affections had inclined toward some of my rivals, since the preference you gave me had cost you so dear. Nevertheless, after seven years of suffering, more in love than ever, I was resolved to see you. I could not resist this desire, which at the end of a long slavery having an opportunity to satisfy, I went in this disguise to Valladolid at the hazard of my life: there being informed of every thing, I came hither, and found means to introduce myself into the family of the gardener, who has hired me to work under him. You see in what manner I have conducted myself to obtain this private interview, but do not imagine that my design is to disturb the felicity you enjoy by remaining in this place. No! I love you more than myself; I have the utmost regard for your repose; and now that I have had the melancholy satisfaction of conversing with you, will go, and finish at a distance that miserable life which I sacrifice to your quiet!"

"No, Don Alvaro! no!" cried I at these words, "I will not suffer you to leave me a second time! I will go along with you, and death alone shall divide us!"—"Take my advice," said he, "and live with Don Ambrosio, do not associate yourself with my misfortunes, but leave me alone to support the weight of them." He said other things to the same purpose, but the more he seemed willing to sacrifice himself to my happiness, I felt myself the less disposed to consent to it; and when he saw me firmly resolved to follow him, he changed his tone all of a sudden, and assuming a more serene air, said, "Madam, since

you have still so much love for Don Alvaro, as to prefer his misery to the prosperity you now enjoy, let us go and live at Betancos, at the further end of Gallicia, where I have a secret retreat. Although my misfortunes have ruined my estate, they have not yet deprived me of friends, I have still some faithful ones remaining, who have put me in a condition to carry you off: by their assistance I have provided a coach at Zamora, bought mules and horses, and am accompanied by three resolute Gallicians, armed with carbines and pistols, who now wait for my orders at the village of Rodillas. Let us, therefore," added he, "take the advantage of Don Ambrosio's absence; I will order the coach to come to the castle-gate, and we will set out instantly." I consented; Don Alvaro flew to Rodillas, and returned in a short time with his three attendants to carry me off from the midst of my women, who, not knowing what to think of this event, ran all away in the utmost consternation: Inez alone was privy to it, but refused to attach herself to my fortunes, because she was in love with the valet de chambre of Don Ambrosio.

I got into the coach with Don Alvaro, carrying nothing with me but my own clothes, and some jewels I had before my second marriage, for I would take nothing that the marquis had given me on that occasion. We took the road to Gallicia, without knowing if we should be so happy as to reach it, having reason to fear that Don Ambrosio at his return would pursue us with a great number of people and overtake us. Nevertheless we continued our journey two days without seeing one horseman behind us; and in

hopes that the third would pass in the same manner, were conversing with each other in great tranquillity. Don Alvaro had just recounted the melancholy adventure which had given rise to the report of his death; and how, after having been a slave five years, he had recovered his liberty; when yesterday, on the road to Leon, we met with those thieves with whom you was in company. He is the person whom they murdered, with all his attendants, and for whom these my tears are shed!'

CHAPTER XII.

The disagreeable manner in which Gil Blas and the Lady were interrupted.

Donna Mencia having ended her relation, shed a torrent of tears, while I, letting her give a free vent to her sighs, wept also; so natural is it to interest one's self for the unfortunate, especially for a fine lady in distress. I was going to ask what she intended to do in the present conjuncture, and perhaps she was about to consult me on the same subject, when our conversation was interrupted by a great noise in the inn, which in spite of us attracted our attention. This noise was occasioned by the arrival of the corregidor, followed by two alguazils* and a guard, who, without any ceremony, entered the room where we were. A gentleman who accompanied them approached me first, and examining my dress

* Alguazils are attendants of justice, whose office resembles that of our bailiffs.

had no occasion to hesitate long, but cried, 'By St. Jago! this is my individual doublet, as easy to be known again as my horse: you may apprehend this gallant on my testimony, he is one of the thieves who have an unknown retreat somewhere in this country.'

At this discourse, by which I understood he was the gentleman who had been robbed, and whose spoils I was unluckily in possession of, I was surprised, confounded, and dismayed! The corregidor, whose office obliged him to put a bad construction on my disorder rather than interpret it favourably, concluded that I was not accused without a reason, and presuming that the lady might be an accomplice, ordered us to be imprisoned separately. This judge, far from being one of those who assume a stern countenance, was all softness and smiles, but God knows if he was a bit the better for that, for I was no sooner committed than he came into the gaol with his two terriers, I mean the alguazils, who, not forgetting their laudable custom, began to rummage me in a moment. What a glorious windfall was this for those honest gentlemen! I do not believe that ever they got such a booty before: at every handful of pistoles they pulled out, I saw their eyes sparkle with joy, the corregidor in particular was transported, 'Child,' said he, with a voice full of meekness, 'we must do our duty, but be not afraid, if thou art innocent thou shalt sustain no harm.' In the mean time, with all their gentleness, they emptied my pockets, and even robbed me of that which the thieves had respected, I mean my uncle's forty ducats; their greedy and indefatigable hands searched me from head to foot, they turned me

about on all sides, and even stripped me to see if I had any money between my shirt and my skin. When they had dexterously acquitted themselves in this manner, I was interrogated by the corregidor, to whom I ingenuously recounted every thing that had happened to me. He ordered my deposition to be taken in writing, and then went away with his attendants and my coin, leaving me entirely naked among the straw.

'O life!' cried I, when I found myself alone in this condition, 'how full of capricious accidents and disappointments art thou! Since I left Oviedo I have met with nothing but misfortunes! Scarce had I got out of one danger when I fell into another! and when I came into this town, I was far from thinking that I should so soon become acquainted with the corregidor.' While I made these vain reflections, I put on again the cursed doublet, and the rest of the dress which my evil genius had lent me; then exhorting myself to take courage, 'Come, Gil Blas,' said I to myself, 'display thy fortitude, it shall ill become thee to despair in an ordinary prison, after having put thy patience to such a severe trial in the subterranean abyss! But, alas!' added I in a sorrowful tone, 'I abuse myself, how shall I escape from hence, when I am utterly deprived of the means?' In effect I had too good reason to say so, for a prisoner without money, is like a bird whose wings are clipped.

Instead of the partridge and rabbit I had bespoke, they brought to me a little brown bread and a pitcher of water, and left me to fret at leisure in a dungeon, where I remained fifteen whole days without seeing a human creature,

except the turnkey, who came every morning to renew my provision. As often as I saw him I endeavoured to speak, and enter into conversation with him in order to divert me a little, but this venerable person made no answer to what I said; I could not extract one word from him, nay, for the most part, he came in and went out without so much as deigning me a look. On the sixteenth day the corregidor coming in, said, 'Thou mayest now give loose to joy. I bring thee agreeable tidings. I have ordered the lady who was along with thee to be conducted to Burgos. I examined her before her departure, and her answers have exculpated thee. Thou shalt be enlarged this very day, provided that the muleteer, with whom (as thou sayest) thou camest from Pennafior to Cacabelos, confirms thy deposition. He is now in Astorga, and I have sent for him, and if he agrees with thee in the adventure of the rack, I will instantly set thee free.'

These words gave me infinite joy: I looked upon myself as already acquitted; I thanked the judge for his just and expeditious decision, and had not quite finished my compliment, when the carrier, conducted by two soldiers, arrived: I remembered his face immediately, but he having, without doubt, sold my portmanteau and all that was in it, was afraid of being obliged to restore the money he had received for it, if he should own that he knew me, and therefore affirmed, with astonishing assurance, that far from knowing me, he had never seen me before! 'Ah, traitor!' cried I; 'rather confess that thou hast sold my goods, and bear witness to the truth. Look at me again. I am one of the young people whom you threatened with the torture, at the

borough of Cacabelos, and frightened very much.' The carrier answered coldly, that I talked of an affair of which he was utterly ignorant; and as he maintained to the last that I was unknown to him, my enlargement was deferred till another time, so that I was obliged to arm myself with patience anew, and resolve to regale myself still with my bread and water, and a sight of the silent turnkey. The thoughts of being unable to free myself from the claws of justice, although I was not guilty of the least crime, threw me into despair. I wished myself again in the cavern, 'where, in the main,' said I to myself, 'I was less disagreeably situated than in this dungeon: there I ate and drank in plenty, conversed with the robbers, and lived in the sweet hope of making my escape, instead of which, notwithstanding my innocence, I shall perhaps think myself happily quit to get out of this place in order to be sent to the gallies.'

CHAPTER XIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was set at liberty at last, and whither he directed his course.

While I passed my days in entertaining myself with these reflections, my adventures, such as appeared in my deposition, spread all over the town; upon which many people being curious to see me, came and presented themselves one after another at a small chink, through which the light was conveyed into my prison; and after having observed me for some time went away. I was

surprised at this novelty, for since the day of my imprisonment, I had not before seen a living soul at that window, which served to enlighten a court where horror reigned in silence. Guessing from this that I made some noise in town, I did not know whether to interpret it as a good or bad omen.

One of the first that offered themselves to my view, was the little ballad-singer of Mondonedo, who having been equally afraid of the torture, had fled as well as I. I knew him again immediately, and as he did not pretend to have forgot me, we saluted one another, and falling into a long conversation, I was obliged to repeat my adventures anew: for his part, he informed me of what had happened at the inn at Cacabelos, between the carrier and the new-married wife, after we had been driven away by a panic: in a word, he acquainted me with the whole of what I have already rehearsed on that subject. Afterwards taking leave of me for the present, he promised without loss of time to labour for my deliverance; and every body who came (as he did) through curiosity, seemed affected with my misfortune, and even assured me that they would join the little ballad-singer, and do all that lay in their power to procure my enlargement.

They kept their promise effectually, and spoke in my behalf to the corregidor, who no longer doubting my innocence, especially when the ballad-singer had told him what he knew of the matter, at the end of three weeks came into the prison and said, 'Gil Blas, I don't choose to protract things, go, thou art free, and mayest quit the prison when thou wilt. But tell me,' pursued he, 'if thou shouldst be brought to the wood

in which the subterranean retreat is, couldst thou not find it out?"—'No, sir,' I replied, 'for as I went in at night, and came out before day, it would be impossible for me to fix upon the spot.' Upon this the judge withdrew, telling me that he was going to order the turnkey to set the prison doors open for me. In effect the gaoler came into my dungeon a moment after, with one of his men carrying a bundle of clothes; and stripping me (with a grave and silent air) of my doublet and breeches, which were made of fine cloth and almost new, they put me on a shabby footman's frock, and pushed me out by the shoulders.

The joy that prisoners commonly feel in recovering their liberty, was moderated by my confusion in seeing myself so poorly equipped, and I was tempted to leave the town instantly, that I might withdraw myself from the eyes of the people, whose looks I could scarce endure: but my gratitude got the better of my shame, I went to thank the ballad-singer to whom I was so much obliged, and he could not help laughing when he saw me. 'What a strange figure you are!' said he, 'justice I see has been done you in all her forms.'—'I do not complain of justice,' I replied, 'she is most equitable, I wish only that all her officers were honest men. They ought at least to have spared my clothes, which I think I paid for pretty handsomely.'—'I shink so too,' said he, 'but they will tell you these are formalities which must be observed. What! do you think (for example) that your horse has been restored to the right owner? not at all; I assure you he is now actually in the stable of the town clerk, where he has been deposited as a proof of the robbery, and I don't believe the poor

gentleman will ever retrieve so much as the crupper. But let us shift our discourse,' continued he, 'what is your design? what scheme do you intend to prosecute at present?"—'I want to go to Burgos,' said I, 'in order to find out the lady I delivered, who will give me a few pistoles, with which I will purchase a new cassock and repair to Salamanca, where I will endeavour to make my Latin turn to some advantage. All I am concerned at is, that I am at some distance from Burgos, and shall want subsistence on the road.'—'I understand you,' he replied, 'here is my purse, 'tis indeed a little low, but a ballad-singer you know is not a bishop.' At the same time he slipped it into my hand so cheerfully, that I could not for my soul refuse the offer, such as it was. I thanked him as much as if he had given me all the gold in Peru, and made a thousand professions of service which I never had an opportunity to perform. Then bidding him farewell, I left the town without having visited those other persons who had contributed to my enlargement, contenting myself with bestowing on them in my thoughts a thousand benedictions.

The little ballad-singer was in the right to speak modestly of his purse, in which I found very little money: but happily for me I had been used two months to a very frugal diet, and I had still some rials left when I arrived at the borough of Ponte de Mula, which is but a very little way from Burgos. Here I halted to inquire about Donna Mencia, and going into an inn, the mistress of which was a little, lean, fierce, insolent creature, I perceived at once, by the disdainful look she darted at me, that my frock was not at

all to her liking, a disgust which I forgave with all my heart. I sat down at table, where I ate some bread and cheese, and swallowed a few draughts of execrable wine which they brought me; and during this repast, which was very well suited to my dress, I wanted to enter into conversation with my landlady. I begged her to tell me if she knew the Marquis of Guardia, if his castle was far from the borough, and in particular if she had heard what was become of the marchioness his lady. 'You ask a great many questions,' replied she, with a scornful look. She told me, however, (though with a very bad grace) that the castle of Don Ambrosio was but a short league from Ponte de Mula.

When I had done eating and drinking (it being by this time pretty late) I expressed a desire of going to rest, and bade them show me into a bed-chamber. 'A bed-chamber for you!' said the landlady, darting at me a look full of haughtiness and contempt, 'I have no bed-chambers for people who sup on a morsel of cheese. All my beds are bespoke. I expect gentlemen of importance to lodge here to-night, so that all I can do for you is, to quarter you in the barn, and it wont, I suppose, be the first time you have slept upon straw.' She did not know how true she spoke, but I made no reply, and very wisely condescended to sneak into the straw, where in a very short time I slept like one who had suffered much fatigue.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of his reception at Burgos by Donna Mencia.

I DID not lie a-bed like a sluggard next morning, but went to reckon with my landlady, who seemed less proud and snappish than she had been the night before, a change that I ascribed to the presence of three honest soldiers belonging to the holy brotherhood, who conversed with her in a very familiar manner. They had lodged all night at the inn, and it was doubtless for these *gentlemen of importance* that all the beds had been bespoke.

Inquiring in the borough the way to the castle whither I wanted to go, I addressed myself by accident to a man of the character of my landlord at Pennaflor: not contented with answering the question I asked, he let me know that Don Ambrosio was dead three weeks ago, and that the marchioness his lady had retired into a convent at Burgos, which he named. I repaired immediately to that city, instead of following the road to the castle as I formerly intended, and flying directly to the convent where she was, begged the favour of the portress to tell her, that a young man just released from the gaol of Astorga desired to speak with her. The nun went immediately to do what I desired, and returning introduced me into a parlour, where I had not been long when I saw the widow of Don Ambrosio appear at the gate in deep mourning.

'You are welcome,' said the lady to me, 'four days ago I wrote to a person at Astorga, desiring him to go to you from me, and tell you that I should be glad to see you as soon as you should be released, and I did not doubt of your being enlarged in a very little time, what I said to the corregidor in your behalf having been sufficient for that purpose. In answer to this he wrote that you had recovered your liberty, that nobody knew whither you was gone, so that I was afraid I should never see you again, and consequently be deprived of the pleasure of manifesting my gratitude. Don't be ashamed,' added she, observing my confusion on account of appearing before her in such a miserable dress, 'let not your present condition give you the least uneasiness. After the important services you have done me, I should be the most ungrateful of all women, if I neglected to do something for you: I intend to extricate you out of the wretched situation in which you are, it is my duty, and I am able to perform it. The considerable wealth I am now mistress of, empowering me to acquit myself toward you without incommoding myself.

'You know,' continued she, 'my adventures to the day on which we were both imprisoned, and I will tell you what has happened to me since. When the corregidor of Astorga had ordered me to be conducted to Burgos, after having heard from my mouth a faithful relation of my story, I repaired to Don Ambrosio's castle, where my return occasioned extreme surprise, though I was told it was too late; for the marquis, thunderstruck at the news of my flight, had fallen ill, and the physicians despaired of his life. This was fresh cause for me to complain

of the rigour of my fate: nevertheless, having advertised him of my arrival, I entered his chamber, and running to his bed-side, threw myself on my knees, my face bathed in tears, and my heart oppressed with the most afflicting grief! "What brings you hither?" said he, when he perceived me, "are you come to contemplate your own work? Was it not sufficient for you to deprive me of life, but you must also have the satisfaction of being an eye-witness of my death?" "No, my lord," I replied, "Inez must have told you that I fled with my husband, and had it not been for the dismal accident which has robbed me of him, you never should have seen me again!" At the same time I let him know that Don Alvaro had been murdered by robbers, who afterwards carried me into their subterranean retreat: and, in short, informed him of all that had happened. When I had done speaking, Don Ambrosio stretched out his hand to me, saying, with the utmost tenderness, "I am satisfied, I will not complain, why should I reproach you? Having found again a husband whom you dearly loved, you abandoned me to follow his fortunes: ought I to blame you for such a conduct? No, madam, I should have been in the wrong to murmur at it, therefore would not suffer you to be pursued: I revered the sacred rights of your ravisher, and even your inclination toward him. In fine, I do you justice, and by your return you have retrieved all my tenderness! Yes, my dear Mencia, your presence overwhelms me with joy! but, alas! it will not last long. I feel my last hour approaching! Scarce are you restored to my arms, when I must bid you an eternal adieu!" At these affecting words my tears redoubled; I

felt and expressed an immoderate affliction; I question if the death of Don Alvaro, whom I adored, had cost me more sighs. Don Ambrosio's presage of his own death was but too true, he expired next day, and I remained mistress of a considerable estate, which he had settled upon me at our marriage. I intend to make no bad use of it. The world shall not see me (though I am still young) throw myself into the arms of a third husband, for besides that I think such conduct would be inconsistent with the virtue and delicacy of my sex, I own I have no longer any relish for the world, but design to end my days in this convent, and become a benefactress to it."

Such was the discourse of Donna Mencia, who taking out a purse from under her robe, put it in my hand, saying, 'Here are a hundred ducats, which I give you only to buy clothes, come and see me again after you have equipped yourself, for I do not intend to confine my gratitude within such narrow bounds.' I gave the lady a thousand thanks, and swore I would not depart from Burgos without taking leaving of her: after this oath, which I had no intention to break, I went in quest of an inn, and going into the first I perceived, demanded a room, telling the landlord (to prevent the bad opinion he might conceive of me from the shabby frock) that notwithstanding my appearance, I was in a condition to pay handsomely for my lodging. At these words, the innkeeper, whose name was Majuelo, naturally a great wag, surveying me from top to bottom, answered dryly with a sarcastic sneer, there was no occasion for such an assurance to persuade him that I should spend like a prince in his

house, for he discovered something noble in me by my dress, and in short did not doubt that I was a gentleman of a very independent fortune. I could easily perceive that the rascal rallied me, and in order to put an end to his witticisms showed my purse. I even counted my ducats on a table before him, and observing that my coin altered his opinion very much in my favour, desired he would recommend me to a tailor. 'You had better,' said he, 'send for a broker, who will bring along with him all kinds of apparel ready made, and fit you in a trice.' I approved of his advice, and resolved to follow it; but the day being near a close, deferred my purchase till next morning, and thought of nothing but making a good supper, to indemnify me for the sorry meals I had made since my deliverance from the cavern.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the manner in which Gil Blas dressed himself. Of the new present he received from the lady, and the equipage in which he departed from Burgos.

They brought for my supper a huge fricassee of sheep-trotters, which I picked to the bones, and having drank in proportion, betook myself to rest. As I had the convenience of a good bed, I was in the hopes of enjoying a sound sleep, but for all that could not close my eyes; my thoughts being engrossed in determining upon the dress I was to choose. 'What must I do?' said I to

myself, 'prosecute my first design, buy a cassock, and go to Salamanca in quest of a tutor's place? But why should I take the habit of a licentiate? Am I ambitious of consecrating myself to the church, or have I the least bias that way? No, I feel myself on the contrary quite otherwise inclined: I will turn gentleman, and endeavour to make my fortune in the world.'

Having resolved upon this, I longed for day with the utmost impatience, and no sooner perceived the glimpse of light than I got up, and made so much noise in the inn, that I wakened all those who were asleep. I called the waiters, who were still a-bed, and who loaded me with curses by way of answer. They were obliged to rise, however, and I gave them no quarter until one of them had gone for a broker, who soon appeared, followed by two apprentices carrying each a green bag on his shoulders. He saluted me with great civility, saying, 'Signior Cavalier, you are very happy in having applied to me rather than to any other body. I don't choose to disparage my brethren. God forbid that I should prejudice their reputation in the least, but between you and me there's no conscience among them. They are all as abandoned as Jews. I am the only honest broker in town. I confine myself to a moderate profit, being satisfied with a pound in the shilling —I mean a shilling in the pound. Thank heaven! I deal upon the square with all mankind.'

The broker, after this preamble, which I took for gospel, ordered his men to untie the bundles, and showed me suits of all colours. Some which were of plain cloth I rejected with disdain, as being too mean; but they made me try one which seemed to have been made exactly for my shape,

and which struck my fancy, although somewhat wore. It consisted of a doublet with slashed sleeves, a pair of breeches, and a cloak, the whole of blue velvet embroidered with gold. Fixing on this I cheapened it, and the broker perceiving I was bent upon it, observed that I had an excellent taste. 'Odds bodikins!' cried he, 'one may see you know what you are about. I can tell you that suit was made for one of the greatest lords in the kingdom, who never had it three times on his back. Examine the velvet, nothing can be finer, and as for the embroidery, you must confess the work is exquisite.'—'What will you sell it for?' said I. He answered, 'Sixty ducats, I am a rogue if I have not refused the money.' The alternative was plain. I offered five-and-forty, which might be about double the value. 'Mr. What-d'ye-call-um,' replied the broker with an air of indifference, 'I never exact too much. I am always at a word. Here,' continued he, showing me some of those I had refused, 'buy this, I'll sell it a pennyworth.' This was only to excite my desire of purchasing that which I had cheapened, and accordingly imagining that he would not abate one farthing of his price, I counted into his hand the sixty ducats. When he saw me part with them so easily, I believe, in spite of his boasted honesty, he wished that he had asked a great deal more: pretty well satisfied, however, with having gained nineteen shillings in the pound, he went away with his apprentices, whom I had not forgotten.

Having now a very handsome cloak, doublet, and breeches, I spent the rest of the morning in providing other necessaries. I bought a hat, silk stockings, shoes, linen, and a sword: after which,

having dressed, what infinite pleasure had I in beholding myself so well equipped! My eyes (to use the expression) could not sufficiently glut themselves with my attire! Never peacock contemplated his own feathers with more satisfaction. That very day I made my second visit to Donna Mencia, who still received me very kindly, and thanked me again for the service I had done her. On that score many compliments passed on both sides; after which, wishing me all happiness, she bade me farewell, and retired without giving me any thing but a ring worth thirty pistoles, which she desired me to keep in remembrance of her.

I looked very blank with my ring, having laid my account with receiving a much more considerable present, and trudged back to my lodgings in a brown study, little satisfied with the lady's generosity. But just as I entered the inn, a man, who had followed me all the way, came in likewise, and laying aside the cloak in which he was muffled up, discovered a great bag under his arm. At the apparition of this bag, which had all the air of being full of money, I, as well as some other people who were present, stared with our eyes wide open; and I thought I heard the voice of an angel, when the man, laying the bag upon a table, pronounced, 'Signior Gil Blas, here is something that my Lady Marchioness has sent you.' I made many profound bows to the bearer, whom I overwhelmed with civility, and he was no sooner gone, than I darted upon the bag like a hawk upon his prey, and carrying it to my chamber, untied it without loss of time, and found in it a thousand ducats. I had just made an end of counting them, when my landlord, who had heard what the porter said, came in to see the

contents of the bag. Thunderstruck at the sight of my coin spread upon the table, 'Zounds,' cried he, 'what a vast sum of money is here! You must be a devil among the women,' added he with a satirical smile, 'for although you have not been four-and-twenty hours in Burgos, you have a marchioness already under contribution.'

This discourse did not disgust me; I was tempted to leave Majuelo in his mistake, which already gave me a sensible pleasure, so that I do not wonder that young fellows love to be thought men of intrigue. My innocence, however, got the better of my vanity I undeceived my landlord, and recounted the story of Donna Mencia, to which he listened with great attention. I then disclosed the state of my affairs, and as he seemed to interest himself in my behalf, begged the assistance of his advice. Having mused awhile, 'Signior Gil Blas,' said he, 'I have a regard for you, and since you have confidence enough in me to unbosom yourself in this manner, I will, without flattery, tell you what I think you are fittest for. As you seem designed by nature for the court, I advise you to go thither and attach yourself to some grandee: but be sure either to meddle in his concerns or enter into his pleasures, otherwise you will lose your time. I know the great. They look upon the zeal and attachment of an honest man as nothing at all, and mind only such as are necessary to them. But you have another resource,' continued he, 'you are young and handsome, and these qualifications alone, without the least glimpse of understanding, are more than sufficient to captivate a rich widow, or some fine lady unhappily married: if love ruins gentlemen of fortune, it often maintains those who have

none. It is my advice, therefore, that you go to Madrid, but you must by no means appear without attendants: they judge there as in other places, by appearance, and you will be considered only in proportion to the figure you make. I will recommend a servant to you—a faithful domestic—a prudent, sober fellow—in one word, a man of my own making. Purchase a couple of mules, one for yourself and another for him, and set out as soon as possible.'

This advice was too much of my own taste to be neglected, I therefore next morning bought two handsome mules, and hired the servant he had recommended: he was a fellow thirty years old, of a simple, religious aspect, born (as he said) in the kingdom of Galicia; his name was Ambrose de Lamela: far from being selfish like other servants, he made no words about his wages, but assured me that he would be contented with what in my goodness I should think proper to bestow. Having provided myself likewise with boots, and a portmanteau to hold my linen and cash, I cleared with my landlord, and early next morning set out from Burgos, on my way to Madrid.

CHAPTER XVI.

Shows that we ought not to trust too much to prosperity.

We slept the first night at Duennas, and arriving at Valladolid the day following, about four o'clock in the afternoon alighted at an inn, which

seemed one of the best in town. I left the care of my mules to my lacquey, and going up stairs into a chamber, whither I ordered a servant of the house to bring my portmanteau, felt myself a little fatigued, and without taking off my boots, threw myself on the bed, where I fell asleep insensibly. It being almost night when I waked, I called for Ambrose, who was gone out, but returned in a little time. When I asked where he had been, he replied with a pious air, that he was just come from church, where he had been to return thanks to heaven, for having preserved him from all evil accidents on the road from Burgos even unto Valladolid: I approved of his conduct, and bade him order a fowl to the fire for my supper.

At that very instant my landlord entered with a taper in his hand, lighting in a lady who seemed more handsome than young, and very richly dressed: she was squired by an old usher, and a little blackamore carried her train. I was not a little surprised when this lady, after having made a low courtesy, asked if I was not Signior Gil Blas of Santillane; to which I had no sooner answered in the affirmative, than she quitted her attendant, and embraced me with a transport of joy that redoubled my astonishment. 'Blessed be heaven,' cried she, 'for this meeting! You are the person, Signior Cavalier, you are the very person I was in quest of. At this preamble I thought of the parasite at Pennaflor, and began to look upon the lady as a downright bite, when I was induced to think more favourably of her by what followed. 'I am,' added she, 'cousin-german to Donna Mencia of Mosquera, who has been so much obliged to you, and received a letter from her

this morning, importing, that having heard you was going to Madrid, I would oblige her very much by treating you handsomely, provided you should pass this way: I have been running all over the town these two hours, inquiring from inn to inn about all the strangers that arrived, and by the description your landlord gave me of you, I imagined you might be the deliverer of my cousin. Ah! now that I have found you,' continued she, 'you shall see how sensible I am of the services you have done my family, and in particular to my dear cousin. You shall come to my house immediately, (if you please,) where you will be more conveniently lodged than here.' I would have excused myself, by representing to the lady that I should incommode her family, but there was no resisting her importunities; there was a coach waiting for us at the door, in which she took care to see my portmanteau secured, 'Because,' said she, 'there are a great many rogues in Valladolid!' an observation I found but too true. In short, I went into the coach along with her and her squire, and suffered myself to be carried away from the inn, to the mortification of the landlord, who, by these means, found himself disappointed of the money which he expected I would spend at his house.

Our coach having rolled some time, stopped at a pretty large house, where we alighted and went up stairs into a handsome apartment lighted by twenty or thirty wax candles. We passed through a good many servants, of whom the lady asked if Don Raphael was come yet, and was answered in the negative: upon which, addressing herself to me, 'Signior Gil Blas,' said she, 'I have a brother whom I expect this evening from a villa

we have two leagues from this: he will be very agreeably surprised, to find in this house a gentleman to whom our whole family is so much indebted.' She had scarce spoke these words when we heard a noise below, which (we were told) was occasioned by the arrival of Don Raphael; and that cavalier, who was a young man of a good shape and genteel address, appeared soon after. 'Brother,' said the lady to him, 'I am extremely glad of your return; you will assist me in doing honour to Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, to whom we can never enough show our gratitude for what he has done in behalf of our worthy kinswoman Donna Mencia: there,' added she, giving him a letter, 'you may read what she has wrote on the subject.' Don Raphael opening the letter, pronounced these words aloud:

'MY DEAR CAMILLA,

'SIGNIOR Gil Blas of Santillane, who preserved my honour, as well as my life, has set out for court, and as he will doubtless pass through Valladolid, I conjure you, by the blood, and still more by the friendship that unites us, to show him all the respect in your power, and detain him some time in your family. I flatter myself that you will give me that satisfaction, and that my deliverer will receive all manner of civility from you and my cousin Don Raphael. At Burgos, your affectionate kinswoman,

'DONNA MENCIA.'

'How!' cried Don Raphael, 'is this the gentleman to whom my cousin owes her honour and life? Ah! heaven be praised for this happy ren-

counter!' So saying, he approached, and clasping me in his arms, 'What joy do I feel,' said he, 'in embracing Signior Gil Blas of Santillane! my cousin the marchioness had no occasion to lay such injunctions upon us, it would have been sufficient to let us know that you was to pass through Valladolid; my sister and I know very well how to behave ourselves towards a gentleman, who has performed such an important piece of service to the person for whom, of all our family, we have the most tender regard.' I answered as well as I could to these compliments, which were followed by a great many more of the same nature, and interspersed with a thousand caresses: after which, perceiving that my boots were still on, they ordered their servants to pull them off, and we went into another room, where the cloth being laid, the gentleman, lady, and I, sat down to supper; during which, they said a thousand obliging things to me: not a word escaped me which they did not repeat as an admirable stroke of wit, and it was surprising to see how attentive they were in presenting me with all the daintiest morsels. Don Raphael drank frequently to the health of Donna Mencia, in which I followed his example, and I imagined that Camilla, who did us justice, sometimes threw certain very significant looks at me. I even observed that she chose proper opportunities of so doing, as if she had been afraid that her brother would perceive it. This was enough to persuade me of the lady's being smitten; and I flattered myself with the hopes of profiting by that discovery, during my short stay at Valladolid. This hope induced me to yield without difficulty to their entreaties, when they requested me to

spend a few days with them. They thanked me for my complaisance, and the joy which Camilla discovered on this occasion, confirmed me in the opinion that I had found the way to her heart.

Don Raphael seeing me determined to stay with him some time, proposed to carry me to his country house, of which he gave me a magnificent description, and talked of the pleasures he would there entertain me with. 'Sometimes,' said he, 'we will take the diversion of hunting, sometimes that of fishing, and if you love walking, we have delightful woods, and gardens in abundance: besides, we shall not want good company, and on the whole, I hope you will not grow melancholy among us.' I accepted his offer, and it was determined that we should go to this charming place the very next day. Having projected this agreeable scheme, we rose from table, and Don Raphael embracing me in a transport of joy, said, 'Signior Gil Blas, I will leave my sister to entertain you while I go immediately to give necessary orders, and advertise those people whom I intend shall be of the party.' So saying he went out of the room, and I continued conversing with the lady, who did not contradict, by her discourse, the soft glances she had thrown at me. She took hold of my hand, and looking at my ring, said, 'You have got a pretty diamond enough, but it is a very small one. Are you a connoisseur in stones?' When I answered in the negative, 'I am sorry for it,' says she, 'for you might have told me what this was worth.' With these words she showed me a large ruby on her finger, and while I examined it, added, 'An uncle of mine, who was governor of the Spanish colonies in the Philippine Isles, made me a pre-

sent of this ruby, which the jewellers here in Valladolid value at three hundred pistoles.'—'I believe it is well worth the money,' said I, 'for it is extremely beautiful.'—'Since you are pleased with it,' she replied, 'I will make an exchange with you.' And immediately she pulled off my ring, and put her own on my little finger. Having made this exchange, which I looked upon as a genteel way of making a present, Camilla squeezed my hand, and looked at me in the most languishing manner, then started up abruptly, wished me good night, and withdrew in great confusion, as if she had been ashamed of disclosing her sentiments.

Novice as I was in gallantry, I knew well enough how to interpret this precipitate retreat in my favour, and concluded that I should pass my time very agreeably at their villa. Full of this flattering idea, and the prosperous condition of my affairs, I locked myself in the chamber where I was to lie, after having ordered my servant to come and wake me early in the morning; but instead of going to rest, I gave a loose to those agreeable reflections, which my portmanteau, that lay on the table, and my ruby inspired. 'Thank heaven!' said I to myself, if I have been unfortunate I am no longer so. On one side a thousand ducats; a ring worth three hundred pistoles on the other! My finances will not be exhausted in a hurry! I see now that Majuelo did not flatter me. I shall inflame the hearts of a thousand ladies at Madrid, since I have made such an easy conquest of Camilla! The favours of that generous lady presented themselves to my imagination with all their charms, and I anticipated the diversions that Don Raphael prepared for me at his house in the

country. In the midst of these pleasing images, however, sleep did not fail to shed his poppies over me: so that finding myself drowsy, I undressed and went to bed.

Next morning when I awaked, I perceived that it was already late, and was a good deal surprised that my valet did not appear, in consequence of the order I had given him over night. 'Ambrose,' said I to myself, 'my faithful Ambrose, is either at church or very lazy to-day.' But I soon lost that opinion of him, and conceived one much worse; for getting up and missing my portmanteau, I suspected him of having stole it in the night. For further information, I opened the chamber door and called the hypocrite several times; at last an old man hearing me, came and said, 'What would you please to have, Signior? all your people departed from my house long before day.'—'How!' cried I, 'your house! am I not at present in the house of Don Raphael?" —'I don't know who that gentleman is,' said he, 'but you are in furnished lodgings, and I am the landlord: last night, an hour before your arrival, the lady who supped along with you came hither, and hired this apartment for a great lord, who she said travelled in-cognito, and even paid me before-hand.'

I was no longer in the dark; I guessed the characters of Camilla and Don Raphael, and concluded that my servants, being perfectly well acquainted with my affairs, had sold me to these sharpers. Instead of ascribing this unlucky adventure to myself, and considering that it would not have happened to me had I not been so indiscreet as to unbosom myself unnecessarily to Majuelo, I imputed all to innocent fortune, and cursed

my fate a thousand times. The owner of the house, to whom I recounted the adventure, which perhaps he knew as well as I did, seemed affected with my sorrow, condoled me, and protested that he was very much mortified to find that such a scene had passed in his house; but I believe, notwithstanding all his professions, he was as much concerned in the trick as my landlord at Burgos, to whom, however, I have always attributed the honour of the invention.

CHAPTER XVII.

How Gil Blas bestowed himself after the adventure of the ready-furnished lodgings.

Having heartily bewailed my misfortune, I considered that instead of giving way to sorrow, I ought to animate myself against mischance, and summoning all my courage to my assistance, said to myself while I put on my clothes, by way of consolation, 'I am happy in that the rogues have not also carried off my apparel, and some ducats which I have still in my purse!' I gave them credit for this piece of civility, and sold my boots, which they had been generous enough to leave likewise, to my landlord for one third of the money they had cost me. Then taking my leave of the ready-furnished lodging, without having occasion, thank God! for any body to carry my baggage, the first thing I did was to go and see whether or not my mules were at the inn where I alighted the preceding night, though I was of

opinion that Ambrose had not left them there, and I wish to God my opinion of him had been always as just! for they told me he had taken care to fetch them away that very evening: wherefore, laying my account with having seen the last of them, as well as of my portmanteau, I strolled about the streets in a melancholy manner, musing on what should be my next course. I was tempted to return to Burgos, and have recourse to Donna Mencia once more; but when I reflected that in so doing I should abuse the generosity of the lady, and at the same time be looked upon as a booby, I relinquished that thought, swearing I should, for the future, be upon my guard against women: and I believe at that time I should have mistrusted the chaste Susanna. I cast my eyes from time to time upon my ring, and when I considered that it was a present from Camilla, sighed with vexation. 'Alas!' thought I, 'though I am no connoisseur in rubies, I have too good reason to know those who exchanged them: and I believe it is not necessary that I should go to a jeweller to be persuaded that I am a fool.'

I was willing, however, to be informed of the worth of my ring, and accordingly showed it to a lapidary, who valued it at three ducats. Though I was not surprised at this estimation, I wished the niece of the governor of the Philippine Isles at the devil, or rather only repeated the wish. As I came out of the jeweller's house, a young fellow who was passing, stopped to consider me. Not being able to recollect him at first, although I had formerly been intimate with him, 'How, Gil Blas!' said he, do you pretend ignorance of me? or have two years altered the son of Barber Nunnez so much, that you do not know him?

don't you remember Fabricius, your companion and school-fellow, with whom you have too often disputed at the house of Dr. Godinez, upon predicables and metaphysical degrees?'

I remembered him before he had done speaking, and we embraced one another with transport. 'My dear friend,' continued he, 'how glad am I to meet thee! I can't express the joy I feel. But,' added he with an air of surprise, 'what do I see! egad! thou art dressed like a prince! a fine sword, silk stockings, doublet and cloak of velvet, embroidered with silver! Odd-'sniggers! this smells strong of intrigues! I'll hold a wager that thou sharest the bounty of some liberal old lady.'—'You are mistaken,' said I, 'for my affairs are not so flourishing as you imagine.'—'Pshaw, pshaw!' replied he, 'you affect to be a close fellow; that fine ruby on your finger, Mr. Gil Blas, whence comes that, I pray you?'—'It comes,' said I, 'from an errant jade. Fabricius, my dear Fabricius, far from being in vogue among the women at Valladolid, know that I am a most ridiculous dupe.'

I pronounced these last words so ruefully, that Fabricius was convinced of my having been imposed upon in some shape or other, and pressed me to tell him what were my reasons for complaining of the fair-sex. I was easily prevailed upon to satisfy his curiosity; but as my story was pretty long, and besides we had no intention of parting in a hurry, we went into a public-house that we might converse together more at our ease: and there, while we breakfasted, I recounted to him all that had happened to me since my departure from Oviedo. He thought my adventures were extremely odd; and after having assured me

that he very much sympathized with me in my present unlucky situation, said, 'We must console ourselves, my child, as well as we can for all the misfortunes of life. When a man of spirit is unlucky, he waits with patience for a more favourable conjuncture. One should never (as Cicero says) let himself be so much dejected as to forget that he's a man. For my own part I am of that very disposition: my misfortunes have not been able to overwhelm me, because I am always above the caprice of fate. For instance, I loved a girl of some fashion at Oviedo, who had a tendre for me; I asked her in marriage of her father, and he refused me. Another on this occasion would have died of grief, but I (admire the force of genius!) carried off the dear creature: as she was passionate, thoughtless, and vain, pleasure of consequence always determined her to the prejudice of duty. I led her a dance for six months through the kingdom of Galicia, from whence, as I had given her a taste for travelling, she was desirous of going to Portugal, but thought proper to choose a new conductor: here was another subject of despair, but for all that I did not sink under the weight of it; and wiser than Menelaus, instead of declaring war against the Paris who had stolen my Helen, I thought myself very much obliged to him for having rid my hands of her. Afterwards, being unwilling to return to the Asturies, that I might avoid all expostulation with justice, I advanced into the kingdom of Leon, spending from town to town the remainder of the money I had carried off with my infanta; for we had quitted Oviedo with the full hand, and arrived at Palencia with a solitary ducat, out of which I was obliged to buy a pair of shoes, so

that the remaining part could not last much longer. My situation became very perplexing, and I was even reduced to a very strict regimen: there was no time to be lost, I resolved to go to service, and hired myself to a great woollen-draper, whose son was an accomplished rake. Here, though I found an asylum against hunger, I was not a little embarrassed: for the father ordered me to be a spy upon the son, and the son entreated me to assist him in cheating the father. Being obliged to determine, I preferred the entreaty to the command, and that preference cost me my place. I afterwards went into the service of an old painter, who would have taught me, through friendship, the principles of his art; in the demonstration of which, however, I was almost famished. This gave me a disgust for painting, and a disrelish for Palencia at the same time; and coming to Valladolid, by the greatest good fortune in the world, I got into the family of one of the directors of the hospital, where I now live perfectly happy. Signior Manuel Ordonnez, my master, is a man of profound piety, who walks with his eyes always fixed on the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. They say, that from his youth, having nothing in view but the funds of the poor, he attached himself to them with indefatigable zeal, and accordingly his cares have not been ill requited, every thing prospers with him. What a blessing it is that he has made himself rich in managing the affairs of the poor!'

Fabricius having harangued in this manner, 'I am very glad,' said I to him, 'to find thee so well satisfied with thy condition, but between you and me, I think you might play a more

honourable part in the world.—'You are mistaken, Gil Blas,' answered he, 'there is no situation in life more agreeable to one of my humour than that which I now enjoy; the employment of a lacquey is troublesome I own to a silly fellow, but to a lad of spirit it is full of charms. A superior genius that goes to service, does not confine himself to the menial circumstances of his duty like a simpleton, he goes into a family to command rather than obey; he begins by studying his master, he accommodates himself to his foibles, gains his confidence, and then leads him by the nose. 'Tis thus that I have behaved toward my director. I soon discovered his hypocrisy, and perceiving that he wanted to pass for a person of great sanctity, I pretended to be his dupe; that costs nothing. I did more, I imitated him, and acting in his presence the same farce that he plays before others, I deceived the deceiver, and am by degrees become his factotum. Under these auspices I hope one day to be concerned in the affairs of the poor, in which case I may chance to make my fortune too; for I find myself as well inclined toward them as he can be, for his heart.'

'These are fine hopes,' replied I, 'my dear Fabricius, I congratulate thee upon thy prospect, and for my own part will have recourse to my former scheme: convert my embroidered habit into a cassock, repair to Salamanca, and listing myself under the banners of the university, perform the office of a tutor.'—'A fine project truly!' cried Fabricius, 'an agreeable whim! What a fool wouldst thou be to turn pedant at thy age! Dost thou know, wretch! what thou art about to do? Soon as thou shalt be employed,

the whole family will have their eyes on thee, and all thy actions will be scrupulously examined: thou must be eternally under restraint, clothe thyself with hypocrisy, and appear possessed of every virtue. Thou wilt not have a moment to bestow upon thy pleasures. Like a perpetual censor of thy pupil, thou must pass the day in teaching him Latin, and in rebuking him when he shall say or do any thing amiss; and after so much labour and constraint, what will be the fruit of thy cares? If the little gentleman wants capacity, it will be said thou hast not given him good education, and his parents will turn thee away without any recompense, perhaps even without paying thy appointments. Don't therefore talk to me of a preceptor's post, which is like a benefice with cure of souls, but commend me to the employment of a lacquey, which is a simple benefice encumbered with no charge. When a master has vices, a superior genius in his service will flatter them, and often turn them to his advantage. A footman lives in a good family without the least disquiet, for after having eaten and drank his bellyfull, he sleeps like the son of a lord, and gives himself no trouble about either baker or butcher.

'I should never have done, child,' continued he, 'was I to recount all the advantages of footmen. Take my advice, Gil Blas, abandon for ever the design of becoming tutor, and follow my example.'—'Yes, but, Fabricius,' said I, 'one does not always meet with directors, and if I should resolve to turn lacquey, I should at least choose to be well settled.'—'Oh! you are in the right,' said he, 'that shall be my business, I will ensure thee a good place, if it was for no other

reason than to snatch a pretty fellow from the university.'

The approaching misery with which I was threatened, and the air of satisfaction that appeared in Fabricius, persuaded me more than his reasons. I determined to go to service: whereupon, leaving the public house, my companion said, 'I will conduct you to the house of a person who is consulted by almost all the footmen out of place; he has spies who inform him of what happens in all families; he knows where servants are wanted; and keeps an exact register, not only of the vacant places, but even of the good and bad qualities of masters: he is one who was formerly a friar in some convent or other, and in short, 'twas he who recommended me to the place I now enjoy.'

While we conversed about such a singular office of intelligence, the son of Barber Nunnez carried me into a blind alley, and we entered a little house, where we found a man about fifty years old writing at a table. We saluted him very respectfully; but whether he was naturally proud, or accustomed to see lacquies and coachmen only, he had contracted a habit of receiving people cavalierly, and did not rise from his seat, but contented himself with making a slight inclination of the head. He looked hard at me, however, and I could easily perceive he was very much surprised that a young man dressed in embroidered velvet should want to turn valet; he had more reason to think I was come to be provided with one: but he did not continue long in suspense with regard to my intention, for Fabricius accosting him at once, said, 'Signior Arias de Londonna, give me leave to present one of

my best friends to you: he is a young man of a good family, whom misfortunes have reduced to the necessity of going to service. Pray inform him of a good place, and depend upon his gratitude.'—'Gentlemen,' answered Arias, coldly, 'this is the manner of you all, before you are fixed you make the finest promises in the world, but once you are well settled you think no more of them.'—'How!' replied Fabricius, 'do you complain of me! have not I done honourably by you?'—'You might have done better still,' said Arias, 'your place is worth a clerk's employment, and you have paid me as if I had introduced you to the house of an author.' Here I interposed, and told Signior Arias, that to show him I was not ungrateful, my acknowledgment should precede his service, at the same time taking out two ducats, I put them into his hand, with a promise that I would not stop there, provided I should find myself in a good family.

He seemed pleased with my behaviour, and said he loved to be treated in that manner. 'There are,' continued he, 'excellent posts vacant, which I will mention, in order that you may choose one to your liking.' So saying, he put on his spectacles, opened a register which lay on the table, turned over some leaves, and began to read as follows, 'A lacquey is wanted for Captain Torbellino, a passionate, cruel, whimsical man, who grumbles incessantly, swears, beats, and commonly maims his servants.'—'Let us pass on to another,' cried I, at that picture, 'that captain is not to my taste.' Arias smiled at my vivacity, and proceeded in this manner: 'Donna Manuela of Sandoval, a superannuated widow, full of peevishness and caprice, has at

present never a footman, she keeps but one for ordinary, and him never a whole day. There has been one livery suit in the house these ten years, which serves all valets who enter, of what size and shape soever they may be: but it may be said they only try it on, for it is still as good as new, although it has been worn by two thousand lacquies. Doctor Alvar Fannez, a physician and chymist, wants a servant: his domestics are well fed, handsomely entertained, and have, moreover, great wages; but he tries experiments upon them with his medicines, and there are often vacant places in his house.'

'Oh, I believe it!' cried Fabricius, laughing, 'upon my conscience you show us abundance of fine places!'—'Have patience,' said Arias de Londonna, 'we have not yet done, there are some that I am sure will please you.' Then he continued to read in these terms: 'Donna Alfonsa de Solis, an old devotee, who spends two-thirds of the day at church, and insists upon her footman's being always along with her, has not had a lacquey these three weeks. The Licentiate Sedillo, an old canon of the chapter of this city, yesterday in the evening turned away his footman.'—'Halt there, Signior Arias de Londonna,' cried Fabricius in this place, 'we will stick to the last post. The Licentiate Sedillo is one of my master's friends, with whom I am perfectly well acquainted. I know that he has for housekeeper an old devotee called Dame Jacinta, who disposes of every thing in the house: it is one of the best families in Valladolid for a servant who loves a quiet life and good cheer: besides, the canon is old and infirm, very much subject to the gout, and will soon make his will.

so that there is room to hope for a good legacy. What a charming prospect for a footman! Gil Blas,' added he turning toward me, 'let us lose no time, my lad, but go instantly to the house of the licentiate, where I will myself present you, and answer for thy character.' At these words, for fear of losing such a fair opportunity, we took our leave, in a hurry, of Signior Arias, who assured me for my money, that if I should be balked of this place, I might depend upon his recommending to me one as good.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Fabricius conducts Gil Blas, and introduces him to the Licentiate Sedillo. The situation of this canon. A description of his housekeeper.

We were so much afraid of coming too late, that we made but one leap from the alley to the house of the old licentiate. We knocked at the door, which was opened by a girl ten years old, who passed for the housekeeper's niece, in spite of scandal, and asking if the canon could be spoke with, Dame Jacinta appeared: she was a person already arrived at the age of discretion, but still handsome, and in particular I admired the freshness of her complexion. She wore a long gown of coarse stuff, with a large leathern girdle, from one side of which hung a bunch of keys, and from the other a rosary of great beads. As soon as we perceived her, we bowed with profound respect, and she returned the salute very civilly, but with a modest deportment and downcast eyes.

'Having understood,' said my comrade to her, 'that master Licentiate Sedillo has occasion for an honest valet, I come to present one with whom I hope he will be satisfied.' The housekeeper at these words lifting her eyes, surveyed me with attention, and not being able to recon

cile my embroidery with the discourse of Fabricius, asked if it was I who wanted the vacant place. 'Yes,' said the son of Nunnez, 'it is this young man, who, notwithstanding his appearance, has met with misfortunes that oblige him to go to service; but he will soon forget his mishap,' added he, with an insinuating air, 'if he has the happiness to come into this family, and live with the virtuous Jacinta, who deserves to be housekeeper to the patriarch of the Indies.' At these words the pious governante moved her eyes from me to consider the polite person who spoke, and struck with his features, which were not altogether unknown to her, 'I have,' said she, 'a confused notion of having seen you somewhere! pray assist my recollection.'—'Chaste Jacinta,' answered Fabricius, 'I am proud of having attracted your notice; I have been twice in this house with my master Signior Manuel Ordonnez, director of the hospital.'—'Ha! you're in the right,' replied the housekeeper, 'I remember it very well, and recollect your face. Ah! since you belong to Signior Ordonnez, you must be a lad of worth and honesty: your place proclaims your virtue; and this young man could not have a better recommendation. Come,' added she, 'I will bring you to speak with Signior Sedillo, who, I believe, will be very glad to have a servant of your representing.'

We followed her accordingly. The canon lodged on the ground floor, which consisted of four rooms, well wainscoted; in one of which she desired us to wait a little, while she went into the next, where the licentiate was. After she had staid with him some time, in order to give him his cue, she came and told us that we might go

in. We perceived the old goutified canon, buried, as it were, in an elbow-chair, with pillows under his head and arms, and his legs supported on a large down cushion. While we approached him, we did not spare bows; and Fabricius being still spokesman, not only repeated what he had said of me to the housekeeper, but likewise extolled my merit, and enlarged chiefly on the honour which I had acquired in philosophical disputes, while I was with Dr. Godinez; as if it was necessary that a canon's footman should be a profound philosopher. Nevertheless, this fine eulogium that he bestowed on me, did not fail to cast a mist before the eyes of the licentiate, who observing, besides, that I was not disagreeable to Dame Jacinta, said to my recommender, 'Friend, I take into my service the young man whom thou hast brought. I am satisfied, and conceive a favourable opinion of his morals, since he is presented by a domestic of my good friend Signior Ordonnez.'

As soon as Fabricius saw that I was engaged, he made a low bow to the canon, another still lower to the governante, and withdrew, very well satisfied; after having whispered to me that we should see one another often, and that I had nothing to do but to stay where I was. When he was gone, the licentiate asked my name and reasons for leaving my native country; and by these questions engaged me, in presence of Dame Jacinta, to recount my story. They were both very much diverted, especially with the account of my last adventure; Camilla and Don Raphael tickling them so much, that it was like to have cost the old canon his life; for while he laughed with all his force, he was seized with such a vio

least fit of coughing, that I imagined it would have been his last. As he had not yet made his will, you may easily guess how his housekeeper was alarmed: trembling and astonished, she ran to the assistance of the good man, rubbed his forehead, and clapped him on the back, as is practised with children when they have the chin-cough. However, this was but a false alarm; the old man ceased to cough, and his governante to torment him; and I would have finished my story, had not Dame Jacinta, who dreaded another fit, opposed it, and carried me out of the canon's chamber into a wardrobe, where, among several suits of clothes, was that of my predecessor. This she made me put on and leave my own in its room, which I was not sorry to preserve, in hopes that it would still be of use to me: after which, we went to prepare dinner.

I was not a novice in the art of dressing victuals, having served a happy apprenticeship under Dame Leonarda, who might have passed for a good cook; she was not, however, comparable to Dame Jacinta, who, for aught I know, would have gained the palm from the cook of the archbishop of Toledo. She excelled in every thing: her soups were exquisite, on account of her art in choosing and mixing the different kinds of gravy of which they were composed; and her hashes were seasoned in such a manner, as rendered them extremely agreeable to the palate. When dinnner was ready, we returned into the canon's chamber, where, while I laid the cloth on a table set just by his elbow-chair, the housekeeper tucked a napkin under the old man's chin, and tied it over his shoulders. In a moment after I brought in a mess of pumidpe

that might have been presented to the most celebrated director of Madrid, and two courses, which would have stimulated the sensuality of a viceroy, had not Dame Jacinta been sparing of her spices, for fear of inflaming the gout of the licentiate. At sight of these delicate dishes, my old master, whom I believed impotent in all his members, showed me that he had not as yet lost entirely the use of his arms: he helped to disencumber himself of his pillows, and cheerfully prepared himself for eating. Though his hand shook, it did not refuse its service, but went and came with great expedition; in such a manner, however, that it spilt upon the table-cloth and napkin one half of what was intended for his mouth. I took away the soup when he had done with it, and brought in a roasted partridge, flanked with two quails, which Dame Jacinta carved for him. She took care also to make him drink frequently large draughts of wine, a little diluted, in a large and deep silver cup, which she held to his mouth as if he had been a child of fifteen months. He fell tooth and nail upon this course, and did no less honour to the birds than he had done to the porridge; and when he had stuffed himself to the tongue, the devotee untied his napkin, replaced his pillows, and left him quiet to take his afternoon's nap in his chair; while we, having uncovered the table, went to dinner in our turn.

In this manner did our canon dine every day, who, forwaught I know, was the greatest glutton of the whole chapter; though his supper was commonly more slight, consisting, for the most part, of a pullet and some conserves. I fed well in this house, and lived a very peaceable life,

having only one grievance, which was no other than being obliged to watch my master, and pass the whole night like a nurse. Besides a retention of urine, that obliged him to ask for his chamber-pot ten times in an hour, he was subject to profuse sweats; and when these happened, it was my business to shift him. 'Gil Blas,' said he the second night, 'thou hast activity and address, and I foresee that I shall be very well pleased with thy service. I recommend to thee, above all things, to behave thyself respectfully toward Dame Jacinta: she is a wench who has served me these fifteen years with a singular zeal, and takes such care of my person, that I can never enough show my gratitude; wherefore, I own she is more dear to me than all my relations. For the love of her I have turned out of doors my nephew, my own sister's son, who paid no respect to the poor girl; and far from doing justice to the sincere attachment she has for me, the insolent boy treated her as a hypocrite; for in this age all virtue appears hypocrisy to young people. Thank heaven! I have got rid of the scoundrel. I prefer the love that is manifested for me, to all the ties of blood, and am swayed only by the benefits I receive.'—'You are in the right, sir,' said I to the licentiate, 'gratitude ought to have more weight with us than the laws of nature.'—'Doubtless,' he replied; 'and people will see by my last will that I have no regard for my relations. My housekeeper will have a good share, and thou shalt not be forgot, provided that thou goest on to serve me as thou hast begun. The footman whom I turned away yesterday has lost a good legacy by his own folly; if that paltry fellow had not, by his misbehaviour

obliged me to dismiss him, I would have made his fortune; but he was a proud coxcomb, who was deficient in his respect for Dame Jacinta; and an idle rascal, who dreaded the smallest trouble. He, forsooth, did not love to watch over me; and looked upon it as a great fatigue to spend the night in contributing to my ease.'—'Ah, the wretch!' cried I, as if the genius of my friend had inspired me, 'he was not worthy of living with such an honourable master! a lad who has the happiness of appertaining unto you, ought to be indefatigable in his zeal; he ought to make a pleasure of his duty, and not think himself fatigued even when he sweats blood and water for your service.'

I perceived that these words were very agreeable to the licentiate, who was no less satisfied with the assurance I gave him of being always perfectly resigned to the will of Dame Jacinta. Willing, therefore, to pass for a valet whom fatigue could not dispirit, I did my duty with the best grace I could assume, and never complained of being up all night: a circumstance which, however, I found very disagreeable; and had it not been for the legacy with which I fed my hopes, I should have been very soon disgusted with my condition. Indeed, I slept some hours in the day-time, and the governante, to do her justice, had a good deal of regard for me: this must be ascribed to the care I took in gaining her good graces, by the most complaisant and respectful behaviour. When I was at table with her and her niece, whose name was Inesilla, I shifted their plates, filled wine, and served them with a most particular attention; by which means I insinuated myself into their friendship. One

day, while Dame Jacinta was gone out to market, seeing myself alone with Inesilla, I began to converse with her, and asked if her father and mother were still alive. 'O, not at all!' answered she, 'they are dead long—long ago, my good aunt told me so. As for my own part I never saw them.' I sincerely believed the little girl, though her answer was not categorical; and put her into such a humour of talking, that she told me more of the matter than I wanted to know. She informed me, or rather I gathered from her artless chat, that her good aunt had a very good friend, who lived likewise with an old canon, whose temporalities he managed; and that these happy domestics expected to join the pillage of their masters by a marriage, the sweets of which they tasted beforehand. I have already observed, that Dame Jacinta, though somewhat superannuated, had still a freshness of complexion: true, indeed, she spared nothing to preserve it; for besides a glyster which she took every morning, she swallowed during the day, and when she went to bed, some excellent jellies of her own composing, and slept soundly all night, while I watched my master: but that which, perhaps, contributed more than any thing to preserve her colour from fading, was an issue, which Inesilla told me she had in each leg

CHAPTER II.

In what manner the canon was treated when he fell sick; the consequence of it; and the legacy which he left to Gil Blas.

I SERVED the Licentiate Sedillo three months, without complaining of the bad nights he made me pass; at the end of which time he fell sick of a fever, and felt his gout increased by the pain which it occasioned; so that, for the first time in his life, which had been long, he had recourse to physicians, and sent for Dr. Sangrado, whom all Valladolid looked upon as another Hippocrates. Dame Jacinta would have been better pleased, if the canon had begun by making his will, and even dropped some hints on the subject; but, besides that he did not believe himself near his end, in some certain things he was extremely obstinate; I therefore went in search of Dr. Sangrado, and brought him to the house. He was a tall, meagre, pale man, who had kept the shears of Clotho employed during forty years at least. This learned physician had a very solemn appearance, weighed his discourse, and gave an emphasis to his expressions: his reasoning was geometrical, and his opinions extremely singular.

After having examined the symptoms of my master's disease, he said to him, with a very physical air, 'The business here is, to supply the defect of perspiration, which is obstructed:

others in my place would doubtless prescribe saline draughts, diuretics, diaphoretics, and such medicines as abound with mercury and sulphur; but cathartics and sudorifics are pernicious drugs, and all the preparations of chymistry are only calculated to do mischief: for my own part, I practise a method more simple and more sure. Pray what is your ordinary diet?"—'My usual food,' replied the canon, 'is broth and juicy meat.'—'Broth and juicy meat?' cried the doctor, surprised; 'truly, I do not wonder to find you sick; such delicious victuals are poisoned pleasures, and snares that luxury spreads for mankind, in order to ruin them the more effectually. You must renounce all palatable food: the most salutary is that which is most insipid; for as the blood is insipid, it requires such victuals as partake the most of its own nature. And do you drink wine?' added he. 'Yes,' said the licentiate, 'wine diluted.'—'Oh! diluted as much as you please,' replied the physician. 'what an irregularity is here! what a frightful regimen! you ought to have been dead long ago. How old are you, pray?'—'I am going in my sixty-ninth year,' replied the canon. 'Right,' said the physician, 'an early old age is always the fruit of intemperance. If you had drank nothing else than pure water all your life, and had been satisfied with simple nourishment, such as boiled apples, for example, you would not now be tormented with the gout, and all your limbs would perform their functions with ease. I do not despair, however, of setting you to rights again, provided you be wholly resigned to my direction.'

The licentiate having promised to obey him in all things, Sangrado sent me for a surgeon whom

he named, and ordered him to take from my master six good porringers of blood, as the first effort, in order to supply the want of perspiration. Then he said to the surgeon, 'Mr. Martin Onez, return in three hours and take as much more, and repeat the same evacuation to-morrow. It is a gross error to think that blood is necessary for the preservation of life; a patient cannot be blooded too much; for as he is obliged to perform no considerable motion or exercise, but just only to breathe, he has no more occasion for blood than a man who is asleep; life, in both, consisting in the pulse and respiration only.' The doctor having ordered frequent and copious evacuations of this kind, he told us that we must make the canon drink warm water incessantly; assuring us that water, drank in abundance, was the true specific in all distempers whatever: and when he went away, he told Dame Jacinta and me, with an air of confidence, that he would answer for his patient's life, provided we would treat him in the manner he had prescribed. The governante, who possibly thought otherwise of this method, protested that it should be followed with the utmost exactness. Accordingly, we set about warming water with all despatch; and as the physician had recommended to us, above all things, not to be too sparing of it, we made my master drink for the first dose two or three pints, at as many draughts. An hour after we repeated it; and returning to the charge, from time to time, overwhelmed his stomach with a deluge of water: the surgeon seconding us on the other hand, by the quantity of blood which he drew from him, in less than two days the old canon was reduced to extremity.

This good priest being quite spent, said to me with a feeble voice, as I presented him with a large glass of the specific, 'Hold, Gil Blas, give me no more of it, my friend, I see plainly that I must die, in spite of the virtues of water; and though there is scarce a drop of blood left in my body, I don't find myself a whit the better; which is a plain proof that the most expert physician in the world cannot prolong our days, when their fatal period is arrived: go, therefore, and fetch a notary, for I want to make my will.' At these last words, which I was not sorry to hear, I affected to seem melancholy; and concealing the desire I had to execute his commission, 'Well, but sir,' said I, 'you are not yet so low, thank God, but that you may recover.'—'No, no, child,' replied he, 'it is all over with me. I feel the gout mounting upwards, and death approaching. Make haste, therefore, and do as I bid thee.' I perceived, sure enough, that he changed visibly, and the affair appeared so urgent, that I went out as fast as possible to fulfil his orders, leaving with him Dame Jacinta, who was more afraid than I that he would die intestate. I went into the house of the first notary I was directed to, and finding him at home, 'Sir,' said I, 'the Licentiate Sedillo, my master, 'draws towards his end, and wants to have his last will made; so that there is not a moment to lose.' The notary, who was a brisk old man, and took delight in rallying, asked what physician attended the canon. I answered, 'Doctor Sangrado.' At that name, seizing his hat and cloak in a hurry, 'Zooks!' cried he, 'let us make haste, for the doctor is so expeditious, that he seldom gives his patients time to send for notaries: that man has chousèd me out of a great many jobs.'

So saying, he followed me with a great eagerness; and while we walked together at a good pace, that we might arrive before he should be at the last gasp, 'Sir,' said I to him, 'you know that a testator at the point of death is apt to forget things: now if my master should not remember me, I beg you will remind him of my zeal and attachment.'—'That I will, my child,' replied the little notary, 'thou mayest depend upon me for that. I will even advise him to give thee something considerable, let him be never so little disposed to reward thy service.' The licentiate, when he came into his chamber, had still the use of his senses, and Dame Jacinta, who was with him, her visage bathed in tears which she had at command, had played her part, and bespoke the good man's benevolence, so that she and I left the notary alone with him, and went into the antichamber, where meeting the surgeon, whom the doctor had sent to make one evacuation more, we stopped him. 'Hold, Mr. Martin,' said the governante, 'you cannot go into Signior Sedillo's chamber at present; he is dictating his last will to a notary who is with him; when that is done you shall have leave to do your office.'

This pious gentlewoman and I were much afraid that the licentiate would die before his will could be finished: but happily for us, the deed that occasioned our disquiet was executed; and the notary finding me in his way as he came out, clapped me on the shoulder, saying, with a smile, 'Gil Blas is not forgotten.' These words inspired me with excessive joy, and I thought myself so much obliged to my master for having remembered me, that I promised to pray with all my heart for his soul, after his death, which soon

happened; for the surgeon having blooded him again, the poor old man, who was but too much exhausted before, expired almost during the operation. As he breathed his last sigh, the physician came in, and looked very foolish, notwithstanding his long practice of despatching patients. Nevertheless, far from imputing the canon's death to his watery draughts and evacuations, he observed as he went out, with an air of indifference, that the patient had not lost blood enough, nor drank a sufficient quantity of warm water; while the executioner of this sublime art, (I mean the surgeon,) seeing also that there was no more occasion for his office, followed Dr. Sangrado.

As soon as the breath went out of our patron's body, Dame Jacinta, Inesilla, and I, raised a concert of mournful cries, which were heard all over the neighbourhood: the governante especially, who had the greatest cause to rejoice, uttered such doleful accents, that one would have thought she was the most afflicted person on earth, and the chamber was instantly filled with people drawn thither, more by curiosity than compassion. The relations of the deceased no sooner learned the news of his death, than they poured into the house to seal up every thing; and found the housekeeper in such affliction, that they imagined, at first, the canon had not made his will: but they soon understood that there was one sanctioned by all the usual formalities, which when they came to open, and saw that the testator had disposed of his best effects in favour of Dame Jacinta and the little girl, they made his funeral speech in terms not much to the honour of his memory: they pronounced an eulogium on the levotee at the same time, and even bestowed

some praises on me, who, I must own, deserved some at their hands; for the licentiate (rest his soul!) in order to make me remember him as long as I should live, explained himself in an article of his will, with regard to me, in this manner: 'Item, As Gil Blas is a young man of some understanding already, in order to complete his learning, I leave to him my library, all my books and manuscripts without exception.'

I could not conceive where this pretended library could be, having never perceived any such thing in the house. I knew only of a few papers, with five or six volumes that stood upon a shelf in my master's closet; and these were my legacy; though the books could not be of any great service to me, one being entitled, The Complete Housewife; another treated of Indigestion and the Method of Cure; the rest were, The Four Parts of the Breviary, which the moths had almost consumed. With regard to the manuscripts, the most curious contained all the proceedings of a law-suit in which he was once engaged for his prebend. After having examined the legacy with more attention than it deserved, I left it to the relations who envied me so much. I gave them back the very clothes I wore, and resumed my own, claiming my wages only as the fruit of my service, and resolving to seek a place elsewhere. As for Dame Jacinta, besides the money which was left to her, she was in possession of some valuable effects, which, by the assistance of her good friend, she had found means to secrete during the licentiate's last illness.

CHAPTER III.

Gil Blas engages himself in the service of Dr. Sangrado; and becomes a celebrated Physician.

I RESOLVED to visit Signior Arias de Londonna, and consult his register for a new place; but as I was just going into the blind alley where he lived, I met Dr. Sangrado, whom I had not seen since the death of my master, and took the freedom to salute him. He recollected me immediately, although I had changed my dress; and expressing some joy at seeing me, 'Art thou there, my child!' said he, 'I was just thinking of thee! having occasion for a good lad to serve me, I imagined that thou wouldst answer my purpose very well, if thou canst read and write.'—'Sir,' answered I, 'in that particular I can do your business.'—'Sayest thou so!' said he, 'then thou art the man I want. Come to my house, where thou shalt find every thing agreeable; I will treat you with distinction, and though I give no wages thou shalt want for nothing! I will take care to maintain thee handsomely, and will even discover to thee the great mystery of curing all diseases; in a word, thou shalt rather be my pupil than my servant.'

I accepted the doctor's proposal, in hopes of making myself illustrious in physic under the auspices of such a learned master; and he carried me home with him on the instant, in order to initiate me in the employment, which consisted in

writing the names and places of abode of the patients who sent for him while he was abroad: for this purpose there was in the house a register, in which an old woman, who was his sole domestic, set down their several directions; but besides that she was utterly ignorant of spelling, she wrote so ill that for the most part it was impossible to decypher her scrawl. I was invested with the charge of this book, which might have been with great justice styled a register of the dead; for almost all the people, whose names it contained, gave up the ghost. I inserted in it (to use the expression) the names of those people who were to set out for the other world, as the clerk of a stage-coach registers those who take places. The pen was seldom out of my hand, because there was not at that time a physician in Valladolid of more credit than Dr. Sangrado, who had acquired great reputation with the public, by a pomp of words, a solemn air, and some lucky cures, which had done him more honour than he deserved.

He did not want practice, nor of consequence money; which however did not make us fare the better, his housekeeper being extremely parsimonious, our ordinary food consisting of peas, beans, boiled codlins, or cheese; which aliments he said were agreeable to the stomach, as being most proper for trituration; in other words, easily brayed. Notwithstanding this his opinion, however, he did not approve of our eating a bellyful even of them; in which to be sure he was much in the right: but if he forbid his maid and me to eat a great deal, he allowed us, by way of recompence, to drink as much water as we could swallow; far from restricting us in this particular, he

would sometimes say, 'Drink, my children; health consists in the suppleness and humectation of the parts; drink water in great abundance: it is a universal menstruum, and dissolves all kinds of salt. When the course of the blood is too languid, this accelerates its motion; and when too rapid, checks its impetuosity.' The honest doctor was so well convinced of the truth of this doctrine, that he himself drank nothing but water, though he was well stricken in years. He defined old age—a natural decay, that withers and consumes us: and in consequence of this definition deplored the ignorance of those who call wine 'the milk of old men:' for he maintained that the juice of the grape wastes and destroys them; and with great eloquence observed that this fatal liquor is to them, as to all the world, a treacherous friend and deceitful pleasure.

In spite of this fine reasoning, I had not been eight days in the house when I was seized with a looseness, and began to feel great disorder in my bowels, which I was rash enough to ascribe to the universal dissolvent and meagre subsistence on which I lived. I complained of it to my master, in hopes that he would relent, and allow me a little wine at meals; but he was too much an enemy to that liquor to gratify my expectation 'If thou feelest in thyself,' said he to me, 'any reluctance to the simple element, there are innocent aids in plenty that will support thy stomach against the insipid taste of water; sage, for example, and baum, will give it an admirable flavour; and an infusion of corn-poppy, gilliflower, and rosemary, will render it still more delicious.'

Notwithstanding all he could say in praise of water, and the excellent beverages he taught me to compose, I drank of it with such moderation, that perceiving my temperance he said, 'Why truly, Gil Blas, I am not at all surprised that thou dost not enjoy good health. Thou dost not drink enough, my friend. Water taken in small quantities serves only to disentangle the particles of the bile and give them more activity; whereas, they should be drowned in a copious dilution. Don't be afraid, my child, that abundance of water will weaken and relax thy stomach: lay aside that panic fear which perhaps thou entertainest of plentiful drinking. I will warrant the consequence; and if thou dost not look upon me as a sufficient bondsman, Celsus himself shall be thy security. That Roman oracle bestows an admirable eulogium on water; and afterwards says in express terms, that those who excuse their drinking of wine on account of a weak stomach do a manifest injury to that organ, by using such a cloak for their own sensuality.'

As it would not have looked well for me to show myself untractable in the very beginning of my career in physic, I seemed persuaded of his being in the right, and will even now own I was effectually convinced; so that I continued to drink water on the guaranty of Celsus, or rather to drown my bile in copious draughts of that liquor; and although I felt myself every day more and more incommoded by it, prejudice got the better of experience; so happily was I disposed by nature for becoming a physician. I could not always however resist the violence of my disorder, which increased to such a degree that

I resolved at length to leave Dr. Sangrado; but he invested me with a new employment, which made me change that resolution. 'Hark'e, my child,' said he one day, 'I am not one of those harsh and ungrateful masters who let their domestics grow gray in their service before they recompense them. I am well pleased with thy behaviour; I have a regard for thee, and without further delay will make thy fortune. I will immediately disclose to thee the whole extent of that salutary art which I have professed so many years. Other physicians make this consist in the knowledge of a thousand difficult sciences; but I intend to go a shorter way to work, and spare thee the trouble of studying pharmacy, anatomy, botany, and physic: know, my friend, all that is required is to bleed thy patients, and make them drink warm water. This is the secret of curing all the distempers incident to man. Yes! that wonderful secret which I reveal to thee, and which Nature, impenetrable to my brethren, hath not been able to hide from my researches, is contained in these two points—of plentiful bleeding, and frequent draughts of water. I have nothing more to impart; thou knowest physic to the very bottom, and reaping the fruit of my long experience, art become in a twinkling as skilful as I am. Thou mayest,' continued he, 'ease me not a little at present: in the morning, thou shalt keep our register, and in the afternoon, go and visit a part of my patients: while I take care of the nobility and clergy, thou shalt go in my room to the houses of tradesmen where I am called; and when thou shalt have practised some time, I will procure thy admission into the faculty

Thou art learned, Gil Blas, before thou turnest physician; whereas others prescribe a long time, generally all their lives, without ever becoming learned.'

I thanked the doctor for having enabled me with such despatch to serve as his deputy; and, as an acknowledgment of his favours, assured him that I would follow his maxims as long as I lived, even if they should be contrary to those of Hippocrates. But this assurance was not altogether sincere; for I disapproved of his opinion with regard to water, and resolved to drink wine every day when I went out to visit my patients. I committed my own clothes to a peg for the second time, and put on a suit of my master's, that I might appear in all respects like a physician; after which I prepared myself for exercising medicine at the expense of whom it should concern. My *coup d'essai* being upon an alguazil, who was ill of a pleurisy, I ordered him to be blooded without mercy, and filled to the tongue with water. I went afterwards into the house of a pastry-cook, who lay roaring with the gout, and whose blood I was no more sparing of than the alguazil's, taking care also not to restrict him in the article of water. For these prescriptions I received twelve rials, which made me so enamoured of the profession, that I thought 'the more mischief the better sport.' Coming out of the pastry-cook's house, I met Fabricius, whom I had not seen since the death of the Licentiate Sedillo; and who, having looked at me some minutes with surprise, set his hands on his sides, and burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. It was not without reason; for having a cloak that trailed on the ground, with a doublet

and breeches that would have served a man four times as big as me, my figure was truly original. I let him laugh till he was tired, not without being tempted to follow his example; but I restrained myself in order to preserve decorum, and the better ape the physician, who is no risible animal. If my ludicrous appearance had excited the mirth of Fabricius, my gravity increased it; and when he had indulged it sufficiently, 'Upon my conscience, Gil Blas,' said he, 'thou art pleasantly equipped. Who the devil has disguised thee in this manner?'—'Softly, friend,' replied I, 'softly. Learn to show more respect for another Hippocrates; and know that I am the deputy of Dr. Sangrado, the most celebrated physician of Valladolid, with whom I have lived these three weeks. He has taught me physic to the very bottom; and as he cannot in person attend all the sick who send for him, I assist in the visitation: he takes care of the great, and I of the plebeians.'—'Very well,' replied Fabricius; 'he leaves the blood of the commonalty to thee, while he reserves that of the gentry to himself! I congratulate thee upon thy share; for it is better to have to do with the populace than with persons of fashion: happy is a suburb physician! his faults are less observed and his assassinations less known. Yes, my child,' added he, 'thy situation is to be envied; and, to speak in the words of Alexander, if I was not Fabricius, I could wish to be Gil Blas.'

To show the son of Barber Nunnez that he had reason to praise the happiness of my present condition, I produced the rials which I had received from the alguazil and pastry-cook; upon which we went into a public house, in order to spend

some of them. Here we were served with pretty good wine, which the longing desire I had of tasting that liquor making me think still better than it was. I drank huge draughts of it, and (no disparagement to the Roman oracle) the more I filled my stomach the less did that organ complain of the injury it received. Fabricius and I having staid together a long time in the public-house, and laughed heartily at the expense of our masters, as is the custom among servants, we parted in the twilight, after having made a mutual promise of meeting again in the same place next day in the afternoon.

CHAPTER IV.

Gil Blas continues to act the Physician with equal capacity and success. The adventure of the ring retrieved.

I had just gone home when Dr. Sangrado came in, to whom I gave an account of the patients I had visited, and put into his hands eight rials which remained of the twelve I had received for my prescriptions. 'Eight rials!' said he, after having counted them; 'this is a small matter for two visits; but we must refuse nothing.' So it appeared; for he kept six, and giving me two, 'Hold, Gil Blas,' added he, 'there is something for thee to begin stock: I allow thee a fourth part of what thou shalt get; and thou wilt be rich in a very short time, my friend: for, please God, there will be plenty of diseases this season.'

I had reason to be contented with my share;

because, resolving to detain a third part of what I should receive from the patients, and afterwards touching a fourth of what should remain, it would on the whole (if there be any truth in arithmetic) amount to one half of what I should earn. This consideration inspiring me with new ardour for my profession, next day, when I had dined, I resumed my physical dress, and going out, visited several patients whom I had registered, and whom I treated after the same manner, though their distempers were quite different. Hitherto things had gone smoothly on; and nobody, thank heaven! found fault with my prescriptions; but however excellent the practice of physic may be, it cannot escape censure. Going into the house of a grocer whose son was dropsical, I there met with a little swarthy physician called Dr. Cuchillo, whom a relation of the grocer's had brought along with him. I made profound bows to every one present, and in particular to the person who I concluded was called to consult with me about the distemper of the patient: he saluted me with great gravity, then eyeing me attentively for some minutes, 'Signior Doctor,' said he, 'pray excuse my curiosity; I thought I had been acquainted with all my brethren the physicians of Valladolid; but I confess your features are utterly unknown to me; sure you must not have been long settled in this city.' I answered that I was a young practitioner who had yet only prescribed under the auspices of Dr. Sangrado. 'I congratulate you,' said he,' bowing, 'on your having embraced the method of such a great man; and I do not doubt that you are already master of your business, notwithstanding your youthful appearance.' He spoke

this so naturally, that I did not know whether he was in jest or earnest; and I was thinking upon some answer, when the grocer, interposing, said, 'Gentlemen, I am persuaded that you are both perfectly well acquainted with the art of physic; therefore pray examine the situation of my son, and prescribe what you shall judge proper for his cure.'

Accordingly, the little doctor inquired into the state of our patient, and after having made me observe all the symptoms of the disease, asked in what manner I proposed to treat him. 'I am of opinion,' said I, 'that he should be blooded every day, and drink hot water in abundance.' At these words the little physician said, with a satirical grin, 'And do you think these remedies will save his life?'—'Never doubt that,' cried I in a resolute tone; 'they must certainly produce that effect; being, as Dr. Sangrado observes, specifics against all kinds of distempers.' 'At that rate,' replied he, 'Celsus is very much to blame, in assuring us, that for a more easy cure of a dropsy, it is requisite to make the patient suffer both hunger and thirst.' 'Oh! Celsus,' I resumed, 'is not my oracle; he was as liable to mistakes as any other; and I have sometimes found my account in acting quite contrary to his opinion.' 'I perceive by your discourse,' said Cuchillo, 'the sure and satisfactory method that Dr. Sangrado would insinuate into young practitioners; the whole of his practice consists in bleeding and aqueous draughts; therefore I am not at all surprised to see so many honest people die under his hands.' 'None of your invectives,' said I, interrupting him with some heat, 'it does not look well to hear a man of your profes-

sion cast such reflections. Come, come, Mr. Doctor, abundance of sick people are sent to the other world without being blooded or drinking hot water; and I don't doubt that you have dismissed your share of them. If you have any thing to say against Dr. Sangrado, commit it to paper; he will answer it, and we shall soon see on which side the laughers are.'—'By St. Jago and St. Dennis!' cried he in a rage; 'you are little acquainted with Dr. Cuchillo! Know, friend, that I have both teeth and nails, and am not at all afraid of Sangrado, who, in spite of his vanity and presumption, is a downright ninny.' The appearance of the little doctor making me despise his wrath, I replied with great bitterness; he answered in the same manner; and we came to fisty cuffs in a very short time: some blows passed, and each of us lost a handful of hair, before the grocer and his kinsman could part us; which when they had accomplished, I was paid for my visit and dismissed, while they retained my antagonist, who seemed to them the more skilful of the two.

After this adventure, I had like to have met with another as bad; for going to visit a fat chaunter who was ill of a fever, I no sooner mentioned hot water than he flew into a rage against the specific, cursed and swore, called me a thousand names, and even threatened to throw me out of the window. I moved off faster than I came in; and not choosing to see any more patients that day, betook myself to the house appointed for the rendezvous between me and Fabricius, who was already there: and as we found ourselves in a frolicsome humour, we drank hard, and went

home in a state of elevation; that is, half-seas over.

Signior Sangrado did not observe that I was drunk, because he mistook my extravagant gestures, in recounting the quarrel I had with the little doctor, for an effect of the emotion occasioned by the battle: besides, having been principally concerned in our dispute, he became a party, and piqued at Cuchillo, said, 'Thou hast done well, Gil Blas, in defending the honour of our remedies against that little abortion of the faculty. He affirms then that aqueous draughts are improper for the dropsy! Ignorant wretch! I maintain—I do—that a dropsical patient cannot drink too much. Yes, water,' added he, 'can cure all kinds of dropsies, as well as rheumatisms, and the green sickness; it is moreover excellent in fevers, where the patient burns and shivers at the same time, and of incredible effect even in those distempers that are imputed to cold, serous, and phlegmatic humours: this opinion may appear strange to such raw physicians as Cuchillo; but it is easily supported by theory and practice; and if such as he were capable of reasoning philosophically, instead of decrying my method, they would become my most zealous partisans.'

He did not therefore suspect my being fuddled, so much was he enraged; for, in order to inflame him the more against the little doctor, I had thrown into my story some circumstances of my own invention. Nevertheless, fired as he was with what I had told him, he perceived that I drank more water that evening than usual, the wine having made me very thirsty. Any other than Sangrado would have suspected my extra-

ordinary drought, and the great draughts I swallowed, but he firmly believed that I began to relish watery potions; and said with a smile, 'I see, Gil Blas, thou hast no longer an aversion to water. Heaven be praised! thou drinkest it now like nectar! a change that does not surprise me at all, my friend; for I knew that it would soon grow familiar to thy taste.'—'Sir,' I replied, 'there's a time for all things: I would not at present give a pint of water for a hogshead of wine.' The doctor, charmed with this answer, did not neglect such a fair opportunity of extolling the excellence of water; but uttered a new eulogium on it, not like a cold advocate, but with all the fervour of an enthusiast. 'A thousand times,' cried he, 'a thousand and ten thousand times more valuable and innocent than the taverns of our days, were those baths of ages past, into which people did not go to prostitute, in a shameful manner, their lives and fortunes, by glutting themselves with wine; but where people met for amusement, and drank hot water with honour and security! One cannot enough admire the wise provision of those masters of civil life, who established public places where water was freely given to all comers, and who secured the wine in the shops of apothecaries, permitting it to be used by the prescriptions of physicians only. What surprising sagacity! It is doubtless,' added he, 'owing to some lucky remains of that ancient frugality, worthy of the golden age, that there are still a few who, like thou and I, drink nothing but water; and who, as a preservative from or cure of all distempers, trust to hot water unboiled; for I have observed that boiled water is more heavy and less agreeable to the stomach.

While he uttered this eloquent harangue I had like to have laughed in his face more than once: I kept my gravity however—I did more: I entered into the doctor's sentiments, inveighed against the use of wine, and lamented that mankind had contracted a taste for such a pernicious liquor. Then (as my thirst was not sufficiently quenched) I filled a large goblet with water, and having swallowed long draughts of it, 'Come, sir,' said I to my master, 'let us regale ourselves with this benevolent liquor, and revive in your house those ancient baths which you regret so much.' He applauded my zeal, and during a whole quarter of an hour exhorted me to drink nothing but water. In order to familiarize myself to this prescription, I promised to swallow a great quantity every evening; and that I might the more easily perform my promise, went to bed with a resolution of going to the tavern every day.

The opposition I met with at the grocer's house did not deter me from prescribing warm water and bleeding next day. As I came out of a house, where I had been to visit a frantic poet, I met an old woman in the street, who accosting me asked if I was a physician: when I answered in the affirmative: 'Well then,' said she, 'I most humbly beg you will come along with me; my niece was yesterday taken ill, and I don't know what is the matter with her.' I followed the old gentlewoman, who conducted me to a house, and introduced me to a pretty neat chamber, where I found a person in bed; and going towards her in order to inquire into the symptoms of her disease was immediately struck with her features; which when I had observed some minutes I recollected her to be no other than the female adventurer

who had so dexterously acted the part of Camilla. As for her part, she did not seem to remember me; whether the oppression of her own distemper or my physical garb secured me from her recollection. Laying hold of her arm, in order to feel the pulse, I perceived my ring upon her finger; at sight of which I felt a terrible emotion, and a violent desire of attempting to retrieve it: but considering that the women might fall a crying, and Don Raphael or some other champion of the fair sex come to their assistance, I was at pains to resist the temptation; and imagining it would be better to dissemble, and to take the advice of Fabricius, stuck to this last resolution. In the mean time, the old woman pressing me to let her know the nature of her niece's distemper, I was not fool enough to own myself ignorant of the matter: but, on the contrary, affecting the man of skill, and copying my master's deportment, I told her with great gravity that the distemper proceeded from the patient's want of perspiration; and that, of consequence, she must be speedily blooded, that evacuation being the only substitute of perspiration; I likewise prescribed warm water, that the rules of our practice might be exactly observed.

Having made my visit as short as possible, I ran to find the son of Nunnez, whom I met at the door, going out to execute a commission for his master: I told him my new adventure; asking if he thought I should cause Camilla to be arrested in course of law: he answered, 'Not at all; that is not the way to see thy ring again; for the officers of justice hate to make restitution. Remember the goal of Astorga, where thy horse, money, and even thy clothes, were detained by these

harpies. We must rather make use of our own industry in recovering thy jewel. I'll undertake to find out some stratagem for that purpose; and I will think of it in my way to the hospital, where I carry a short message to the steward from my master: go and wait for me at our tavern; and be not impatient, for I will be with thee in a very little time.'

He did not, however, arrive at the rendezvous till after I had been there three hours; and then so disguised, that at first I did not know him; for he had changed his dress, twisted his hair into a queue, covered one half of his face with a pair of artificial whiskers, provided himself with a huge sword, the hilt of which was at least three feet in circumference; and marched at the head of five men who looked as fierce as himself, and wore also long rapiers and thick mustachios. 'Your servant, Signior Gil Blas,' said he, accosting me; 'you see in me an alguazil of a new stamp, and in these brave fellows who accompany me, soldiers of the same model. Show us only the house of the woman who stole your diamond, and be assured that we will make her restore it in a twinkling.' I embraced Fabricius at this discourse, which explained the stratagem he intended to put in practice in my behalf; and assured him that I very much approved of his expedient. I saluted also the false soldiers, who were three valets, and two journeymen barbers of his acquaintance, whom he had engaged to act this part. Having treated the whole brigade with wine, we went all together in the twilight to Camilla's lodging, and knocked at the door: which the old woman opening, and taking my attendants for the terriers of justice, who never entered

that house without cause, was seized with consternation. 'Courage, good mother,' said Fabricius to her, 'we are come hither only on account of a small affair that will soon be determined.' So saying, we advanced to the chamber of the sick person, conducted by the old woman, who walked before, lighting us with a wax taper in a silver candlestick. Taking the candle in my hand, I went towards the bed, and discovering my face to Camilla, 'Perfidious woman!' said I, 'behold the too credulous Gil Blas whom you have tricked. Ah wretch! I have found you at last, and the corregidor, in consequence of my information, has ordered this alguazil to apprehend you.—Come, Mr. Tipstaff,' said I to Fabricius, 'do your office.'—'There is no occasion,' answered he, raising his voice, 'for exhorting me to do my duty. I remember that there creature, who has been a long time marked in my memorandum-book with red letters. Rise, my princess,' added he, 'dress yourself with all despatch. I intend to be your usher, and conduct you to the city gaol if you think well of it.'

At these words, Camilla, sick as she was, perceiving that two of his followers, with the great whiskers, were about to drag her out by force, sat up in her bed, clasped her hands in a suppliant posture, and looking at me with terror in her eyes, 'Signior Gil Blas,' said she, 'I conjure you, by the chaste mother who bore you, to have pity upon me! though I am very guilty, I am still more unfortunate! don't ruin me, I will restore your ring.' So saying, she took it off from her finger and put it into my hand; but I told her my diamond alone would not suffice, and that she must besides make restitution of the thousand ducats which had been

stole from me in the furnished lodgings. 'Oh, Signior!' she replied, 'do not ask your ducats of me; the traitor Don Raphael, whom I have not seen since that time, carried them off the same night.'—'O ho! my little darling,' said Fabricius to her, 'you think to get out of the scrape by denying you had any share of the booty; but you shan't be so easily quit, I assure you: your being an accomplice of Don Raphael, is a sufficient reason for obliging you to give an account of your past life. You have, doubtless, a great many things on your conscience, and therefore you shall go to prison, (if you please,) and make a general confession. I will carry this old gentlewoman thither also,' added he; 'for I imagine she knows a great many curious stories, which the corregidor will not be sorry to hear.'

At these words the two women put every art in practice to melt us, filling the chamber with cries, groans, and lamentations. While the old woman, on her knees, sometimes before the alguazil, and sometimes before his attendants, endeavoured to move their compassion; Camilla implored me in the most affecting manner to save her from the hands of justice: upon which I pretended to relent, saying to the son of Nunnez, Mr. Officer, since I have got my diamond I am satisfied. I don't desire to give this poor woman any further trouble, and would not even seek the death of a sinner.'—'For shame!' said he! 'a man of your humanity would make a bad trooper; but I must acquit myself of my commission, by which I am expressly ordered to apprehend these infantas; for the corregidor wants to make an example of them.'—'For heaven's sake!' I replied, 'have some regard to entreaty, and abate a little

of your severity in consideration of the present which these ladies will offer.' 'Oh! that's another affair,' said he: 'that is what we call a figure of rhetoric well placed. Come, let us see what they have got to give me.' 'I have,' said Camilla, 'a pearl necklace, and ear-rings of considerable value.' Here she was interrupted with, 'Yes, but if they come from the Philippine Isles I'll have none of them.' 'You may take them upon my word, I'll warrant them genuine,' said she: at the same time desiring the old woman to bring a little box; out of which she took the necklace and ear-rings, and put them into the alguazil's hand. Though he knew no more of jewels than I did, he was persuaded that the diamonds of the ear-rings were genuine, as well as the pearls of the necklace; therefore having examined them attentively, 'These jewels,' said he, 'seem to be of a good water; and provided the silver candlestick, which Signior Gil Blas, has in his hand, be added to them, I wont answer for my fidelity.' 'I don't believe,' said I to Camilla, 'that you will for a trifle break off a treaty so much to your advantage.' So saying, I gave the light to the old woman, and the candlestick to Fabricius, who being satisfied with what he had got, because, perhaps, he saw nothing else in the room which he could easily carry off, said to the ladies, 'Adieu, my princesses, live in peace; I will speak to the corregidor, and represent you whiter than snow: for such as we can give what turn we please to things, and never tell him the plain truth, except when we are under no temptation to lie.'

CHAPTER V.

The sequel of the ring retrieved. Gil Blas quits the profession of physic, and makes his retreat from Valladolid.

After having in this manner executed the scheme of Fabricius, we left Camilla's lodgings, congratulating ourselves upon a piece of success that even surpassed our expectation; for we had laid our account with recovering the ring only. However, we carried off the rest without ceremony; and far from making a scruple of robbing courtezans, we thought we had done a meritorious action. 'Gentlemen,' said Fabricius, when he had got into the street, 'it is my opinion that we should go back to the tavern, and spend the night in making merry. To-morrow we will sell the candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, and share the money like brothers; after which we will return to our several homes, and make the best excuse we can to our masters. This proposal of the alguazil seeming very reasonable to us all, we returned to the tavern, some of us believing we could easily find an excuse for having lain abroad, and others not caring whether they should be dismissed or not.

We ordered a good supper, and sat down to table with as much appetite as good humour. The repast was seasoned with a thousand agreeable sallies; and Fabricius, in particular, enlivened the conversation, and diverted us all extremely

by innumerable strokes replete with Castilian salt, which is equal at least to the ancient Attick. But while we were in this jovial disposition, our mirth was all of a sudden overcast by an unforeseen accident. A man of a pretty good mien entered the room where we were at supper, followed by two others of terrible aspect; after these three more appeared; and we counted no less than twelve who came in thus, three by three, armed with carbines, swords, and bayonets. We soon perceived them to be the soldiers of the patrole, and it was not difficult to guess their intention; wherefore we had some thoughts, at first, of making resistance; but they surrounded us in an instant, and kept us in awe, as well by their numbers as their fire-arms. 'Gentlemen,' said their commander to us with a sneer, 'I know by what ingenious artifice you have recovered a ring from the hands of a certain she-adventurer; and to be sure the contrivance is excellent, and richly deserves a public recompense, which you shall by no means miss. Justice has already appointed an apartment for you in her own house, and will not fail to reward such a masterly attempt.' This discourse very much disconcerted all those to whom it was addressed: our countenances changed; and we felt in our turn the same fear with which we had inspired Camilla. Fabricius, however, though pale and dismayed, endeavoured to justify what he had done. 'Sir,' said he, 'as we had no bad intention, this little trick might be forgiven.' 'How the devil!' cried the commandant in a rage, 'do you call this a little trick? Don't you know that it is a hanging matter? For, besides that no man is allowed to do justice to himself without the

cognizance of the law, you have carried off a candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings. that did not belong to you; and, which is still worse, in order to commit that robbery, you have disguised yourselves like tipstaves—Wretches! to dress yourselves in the habit of such honourable people to do mischief! I shall think you very lucky if you are only sentenced to the galleys!' When he had convinced us that the affair was much more serious than we at first imagined, we fell down together at his feet, and begged he would have pity on our youth. But our prayers were disregarded; and besides, he rejected a proposal we made of quitting to him the necklace, ear-rings, and candlestick: even my ring was refused, because (I suppose) it was offered before too much company. In short, he was quite inexorable; ordered my companions to be disarmed, and carried us all to the public goal. In our way thither, one of the guard told me that the old woman who lived with Camilla, suspecting that we were not real foot-pads of justice, had followed us to the tavern; and there being confirmed in her opinion, had revenged herself upon us, by informing the patrole of the whole affair.

We were immediately plundered of every thing; the necklace, diamonds, and candlestick seized; as also my ring, together with the ruby of the Philippine Isles, which I had unfortunately in my pocket. They did not even spare the rials which I had that day received for my prescriptions; which was a sure sign to me, that the people belonging to justice at Valladolid, are as expert in their office as those at Astorga, and that the manners of all those gentlemen are every where alike. While I was rifled of my jewels

and cash, the officer of the patrole recounted our adventure to these agents of the plunder; and the affair seemed to them of such a serious nature, that the majority thought we deserved a halter: but others, less severe, imagined we might get off for two hundred lashes each, and a few years service in the galleys. Until the corregidor should think proper to decide our affair, we were locked up in a dungeon, where we lay upon straw, with which it was strewed like a stable littered for horses. Here we might have remained long enough, and at last exchanged our habitation for the galleys, had not Signior Manuel Ordonnez next day heard of our misfortunes, and resolved to procure the liberty of Fabricius, which he could not do without obtaining also the dismission of us all. Being a man very much esteemed in the city, he did not spare solicitations; and partly by his own credit, and partly by that of his friends, at the end of three days effected our enlargement. But we did not come out as we had gone in; the candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, my ring, ruby, and rials, being detained: which made me remember those verses of Virgil, that begin with, '*Sic vos non vobis.*'

As soon as we were at liberty, we returned to our masters; and Dr. Sangrado received me very kindly, saying, 'My poor Gil Blas, I did not hear of thy misfortune till this morning, and was just going to make strong solicitations in thy behalf. Thou must console thyself, my friend, for this accident, and attach thyself more than ever to physic.'—'That is my design,' said I. And truly I thought of nothing else. Far from wanting business, it happened as my master had foretold,

that distempers were very ripe; the small-pox and putrid fever beginning to ravage the city and suburbs; so that all the physicians in Valladolid, and we in particular, had abundance of practice. Scarce a day passed in which we did not visit eight or ten patients each; from whence it may be easily conceived what a quantity of blood was spilt, and water drank. But I do not know how it happened; all our sick died, either on account of our mal-practice, or because their diseases were incurable. Certain it is, we very seldom had occasion to make three visits to one patient: at the second, we were either told that he was just going to be buried, or found him at the last gasp; and, as I was but a young physician, who had not yet time to be inured to murder, I began to be very uneasy at the fatal events which might be laid to my charge. 'Sir,' said I one evening to Dr. Sangrado, 'I take heaven to witness that I follow your method with the utmost exactness; yet, nevertheless, every one of my patients leaves me in the lurch. It looks as if they took a pleasure in dying, merely to bring our practice into discredit. This very day I met two of them going to their long home.'—'Why truly, child,' 'answered he, 'I have reason to make pretty much the same observation: I have not often the satisfaction of curing those who fall into my hands; and if I was not so sure as I am of the principles upon which I proceed, I should think my remedies were pernicious in almost all the cases that come under my care.'—'If you will take my advice, sir,' said I, 'we will change our method, and give chymical preparations to our patients, through curiosity; the worst that can happen will only be, that they produce the

same effect that follows our bleedings and warm water.'—'I would willingly make the experiment,' he replied, 'provided it could have no bad consequence; but I have published a book, in which I have extolled the use of frequent bleeding and aqueous draughts; and wouldst thou have me go and decry my own work?" 'Oh! you are certainly in the right,' said I; 'you must not give your enemies such a triumph over you: they would say, you are at last disabused; and therefore ruin your reputation: perish, rather, the nobility, clergy, and people! and let us continue in our old path. After all, our brother-doctors, notwithstanding their aversion for bleeding, perform as few miracles as we do; and I believe their drugs are no better than our specifics.'

We went to work, therefore, afresh, and proceeded in such a manner, that in less than six weeks, we made more widows and orphans than the siege of Troy. By the number of burials, one would have thought that the plague was in Valladolid; and every day, some father came to our house to demand an account of his son, whom we had ravished from him, or some uncle to upbraid us with his nephew's death. As for the sons and nephews, whose fathers and uncles we had despatched, they never appeared to complain: the husbands too were very civil, and never cavilled with us about the loss of their wives. But those afflicted people, whose reproaches we were obliged to undergo, were sometimes very brutal in their grief, and called us ignorant assassins. As they did not spare me, in particular, I was afflicted by their epithets; but my master, who was used to

such accidents, heard them without the least emotion. I might, perhaps, in time, have been accustomed to reproach as well as he, if heaven, doubtless, to rid the sick people in Valladolid of one of their most severe scourges, had not produced an incident that gave me a disgust to physic, which I practised with so little success.

There was in our neighbourhood a tennis-court, to which the idle people in town daily resorted, and among the rest, one of your professed bullies, who take upon themselves the office of arbiters, and decide all differences that happen. He was from Biscay, his name Don Rodrigo de Mondragon, about thirty years of age, of an ordinary make, but lean and muscular; he had two little twinkling eyes that rolled in his head, and threatened every body he looked at; a very flat nose, placed between ed whiskers that curled up to his very temples, and a manner of speaking so rough and passionate, that his words struck terror into every body. This racket-breaker had made himself tyrant of the tennis-court, where he judged all the disputes that happened among those who played, in the most imperious manner, and no man durst appeal from his decision, unless he would resolve to fight him next day. Such as I have described Don Rodrigo, (who notwithstanding the Don he had prefixed to his name, was an arrant rascal) he captivated the mistress of the tennis-court, who was a woman about forty years of age, rich and agreeable enough, and in the fifteenth month of her widowhood. I know not how he won her heart; for, doubtless, it was not by his beauty; but surely by that *je ne scai quoy*

which cannot be expressed. Be that as it will, she had a passion for him, and actually designed to take him for her husband; but while preparations were making for the consummation of that affair, she fell sick, and unhappily employed me as her physician. If her distemper had not been a malignant fever, my prescriptions were sufficient to endanger her life: so that in four days I filled the tennis-court with mourning: the mistress went the way of all my patients, and her relations took possession of her estate. Don Rodrigo, made desperate by the loss of his mistress, or rather by being balked in his expectation of a very advantageous match, not only cursed and reviled me, but also swore that he would run me through the body whenever he could catch me, and exterminate me from the face of the earth. A charitable neighbour informed me of this oath, and advised me not to stir abroad, for fear of meeting this devil of a man. This advice, which I had no intention to neglect, filled me with confusion and dismay; I fancied incessantly that I saw this furious Biscayan coming into the house, and could not enjoy one moment's repose. This effectually detached me from physic, and my sole care was how to free myself from disquiet: I resumed my embroidered suit, and after having bid adieu to my master, who could not persuade me to stay, quitted the city at day-break, not without apprehension of meeting Don Rodrigo in my way.

CHAPTER VI.

Of his route when he left Valladolid; and the person he joined on the road.

I WALKED very fast, looking behind me from time to time, to see if this formidable Biscayan was not at my heels; my imagination being so much possessed by that fellow, that I took every tree or bush that I saw for him, and every moment felt my heart throb with fear. I plucked up my courage, however, when I had gone a good league, and continued, at an easier pace, my journey towards Madrid, whither my purpose was to go. I should have quitted Valladolid without regret, had I not been sorry to part from Fabricius, my dear Pylades, to whom I could not so much as bid adieu: but it gave me no mortification to renounce physic; on the contrary, I begged pardon of God for having exercised it at all; though I did not fail to count, with pleasure, the money I had in my purse, notwithstanding its being the salary of my assassinations. in that respect, resembling those ladies of pleasure who reform their morals, but nevertheless keep fast hold of the wages of sin. My whole fortune amounted to pretty near the value of five ducats in rials; on the strength of which I expected to reach Madrid, where I had no doubt of finding some good place: besides, I longed passionately to see that august city, which had been extolled to me as the epitome of all the wonders of the world.

While I recollected all that I had heard in its praise, and enjoyed its pleasures by anticipation, I heard the voice of a man behind me singing at full stretch: he had a leathern wallet on his back, a guitar hanging about his neck, a long sword by his side, and walked so fast, that he was up with me in a very short time. Being one of the two journeymen barbers with whom I had been imprisoned in the adventure of the ring, we knew one another immediately, though our dress was altered, and were very much surprised at meeting so unexpectedly on the highway. I assured him, that I was extremely glad to have him for a fellow-traveller; and his joy seemed no less at meeting with me. I told him my reason for quitting Valladolid, and he reposed the same confidence in me, by letting me know that he had quarrelled with his master and bid him an eternal adieu. 'If I had been inclined,' added he, 'to live any longer in Valladolid, I could have found employment in abundance of shops; for, without vanity, I can handle a razor and curl a mustachio, as well as e'er a barber in Spain: but I could no longer resist the violent desire I had to visit the place of my nativity, from which I have been absent these ten years: I want to breathe my own country air a little, and know the situation of my family, with whom I hope to be in two days; for they live at a place called Olmedo, a market-town on this side of Segovia.'

Resolving to accompany this barber to his own home, and from thence go to Segovia, in order to take the opportunity of some convenience to Madrid, we pursued our journey, and discoursed of indifferent subjects. He was a young fellow of some wit and humour; and when he had conversed

together an hour, he asked how my stomach was disposed: I answered that he should see at the first inn. Upon which he said, 'We had better make a pause in the mean time: I have something for breakfast in my wallet; for when I travel, I always take care to have provision along with me. I don't trouble myself with clothes, linen, and other useless baggage; but resolving to have nothing superfluous, fill my knapsack with belly-timber, my razors and a washball.' I commended his prudence; and consented with all my heart to the pause he proposed; for I was hungry, and resolved to make a good meal, which I could not but expect, after what he had told me. We turned a little out of the high-way, in order to sit upon the grass, where my friend the barber took out his victuals, consisting of five or six onions, with a few crusts of bread and cheese; but what he produced as the best furniture of his budget was a little bottle full (as he said) of delicate wine. Though our dishes were not very savoury, hunger being very urgent with us both, made them relish pretty well; and we emptied the bottle, which contained about two pints of a sort of wine that I don't choose to boast much of; after which, we got up, and continued our journey with great good humour. The barber, who had been informed by Fabricius that I had met with some very particular adventures, desired to hear them from my own mouth; a satisfaction I could not refuse to a man who had regaled me so sumptuously. When I had gratified his curiosity, I told him he could do no less in return for my complaisance, than recount the story of his own life. 'Oh! as for my story,' cried he, 'it is not worth hearing, as it contains nothing but ordinary facts;

nevertheless,' added he, 'since we have nothing else to do, you shall hear it, such as it is.' So saying, he related it nearly in these words.

CHAPTER VII.

The story of the Journeyman Barber.

'FERDINAND Feres de la Fuenta, my grandfather, (I go to the fountain-head) after having been fifty years barber in the village of Olmedo, died, and left four sons, the eldest of whom took possession of his shop, and succeeded him in his business; Bertrand, the second having an inclination for trade, became a mercer; Thomas, who was the third, kept a school; and the fourth, whose name was Pedro, feeling himself born for the Belles Lettres, sold a little lot of ground which he had for his patrimony, and went to live at Madrid, where he hoped one day to distinguish himself by his wit and learning; while his three brothers did not separate, but settling at Olmedo, married the daughters of husbandmen, who, in lieu of fortune, brought them abundance of children; breeding as if it had been for a wager. My mother, the barber's wife, brought six into the world for her share, in the first five years of her marriage; of which number I am one. My father taught me betimes to shave, and when I arrived at the age of fifteen, put this wallet upon my shoulders, and girding me with a long sword, said, 'Go, Diego, thou art now in a condition to gain a livelihood; go, and see the world: thou hast occasion for a little travelling; go rub thee

up, and make thee perfect in thy business. March, and don't return to Olmedo before thou hast made the tour of Spain. Let me not hear from thee until this be performed.' At these words he embraced me very affectionately, and turned me out of doors.

'Such was the behaviour of my father at parting with me. But my mother, whose manners were not quite so rough, seemed more affected on this occasion: she let fall some tears, and even slipt a ducat privately into my hand. So I quitted Olmedo, and took the road to Segovia; of which, however, I had not walked above two hundred paces, when I stopped to examine my knapsack, being desirous of seeing what it contained, and of knowing precisely the extent of my possession. I found a case, and two razors, so much worn, that they seemed to have shaved two generations, with a thong of leather to set them, and a lump of soap: besides, there was a canvas shirt quite new, an old pair of my father's shoes, and what gave me more pleasure than all the rest, twenty rials wrapped up in a linen rag. This was my whole fortune; by which you may conclude, that Master Nicholas the barber relied a good deal on my skill, since he sent me away so poorly provided. Nevertheless, the possession of a ducat and twenty rials did not fail to charm a young fellow like me, who had never before been master of a coin: I believed my funds were inexhaustible, and continued my journey in a transport of joy, admiring every moment the hilt of my sword, which thumped against my hams, or got between my legs at every step.

'Arriving at the village of Antaquines in the evening, very sharp set, I went to lodge at an inn;

and, as if I had been a man of fortune, called for supper, with an air of authority: the landlord having surveyed me some time, and seeing who he had to do with, said, in a very obliging manner, "Master, you shall be satisfied, we will treat you like a prince." So saying, he showed me into a little room; where in a quarter of an hour they brought me a ragout made of ram-cat, which I ate as greedily as if it had been composed of a rabbit or hare. This excellent dish was accompanied with wine, so good, as he said, that the king himself could not drink better. Notwithstanding this eulogium, I perceived it was cursedly sour; but this did not hinder me from doing as much honour to it as I had already done to the ragout; and, to complete the treatment of a prince, I was conducted to a couch, more proper for encouraging watchfulness than sleep; being a truckle-bed so narrow and short, that, little as I was, I had not room to lie in it with my legs extended; besides, instead of matress and feather bed, it had only a wretched flock-bed, covered with a doubled sheet, which had served a hundred different travellers at least since the last washing. Nevertheless, in such a convenience, my stomach full of ragout, and that delicious wine which the landlord had recommended, thanks to my youth and constitution, I enjoyed a sound sleep, and spent the night without indigestion.

'Next day, after having breakfasted and paid sauce for my good cheer, I made but one stage to Segovia; and, on my first arrival, had the good fortune to be employed in a shop for my board and lodging. Here, however, I staid but six months; being seduced by a brother journeyman of my acquaintance, who longed to see Madrid.

and with whom I set out for that city. There I got a place on the same terms as at Segovia, in a well-accustomed shop, much frequented on account of the neighbourhood of the church of Santa Cruz, and the Prince's Theatre; my master, two journeymen, and I, being scarce sufficient to trim all our customers, who consisted of people of all ranks; and among others, of players and authors. One day, two persons of the last profession being there together, began to discourse about the poetry and poets of the time; and hearing them mention the name of my uncle, I listened to their conversation with great attention. "Don Juan de Zavaleta," said one of them, "is an author, in my opinion, beneath the public notice, a cold genius, a man without fancy: his last piece has done him infinite prejudice."— "And pray," said the other, "has ever Lewis Velez de Guevara produced a good work? was ever any thing more wretched than his performances?" They named a great many more poets, whom I have forgot. I remember only that they spoke contemptuously of them all, except my uncle, of whom they made honourable mention, agreeing that he was a lad of merit. "Yes," said one of them, "Don Pedro de la Fuenta is an excellent writer: his books contain a delicate raillery mixed with erudition, which makes them agreeably satirical; and I am not at all surprised at his being esteemed by the court and city, or at his receiving salaries from several grandees."— "He has, indeed," said the other, "enjoyed a pretty large income these many years; and as he lives with the Duke of Medina Cœli, and spends little, must be worth a considerable sum of money"

'I did not lose one word which the poets said concerning my uncle, who, we had heard in the family, made a noise in Madrid by his works, some people travelling through Olmedo having told us so; but as he neglected to let us hear from him, and seemed quite detached from his relations, we, on our part, lived in as great indifference toward him. True blood is, however, always guided by a sure instinct: as soon as I heard that he was in good circumstances, and knew where he lodged, I was tempted to wait upon him; though one thing embarrassed me not a little, his being called Don Pedro by the authors. That Don gave me some uneasiness; and I was afraid he might be some other poet than my uncle. I was not, however, stopped by this consideration; but imagined that he might have been ennobled on account of his wit, and therefore resolved to go and see him. For this purpose, with my master's permission, I dressed myself as well as I could, and went out of the shop, not a little proud of being nephew to a man who had acquired such reputation by his genius. As the barbers are not the least vain people in the world, I began to conceive a great opinion of myself, and strutting with a haughty air, inquired for the house of the Duke de Medina Cœli; where presenting myself at the gate, and saying, I wanted to speak with Don Pedro de la Fuenta, the porter pointed with his finger to a little stair-case, at the further end of a court, which he bid me ascend, and knock at the first door on my right-hand: I did so, and (a young man coming out) asked if Signior Don Pedro de la Fuenta lodged there. "Yes,' said he, "but you cannot see him at present."—"I should be

very glad," replied I, "to speak with him; for I bring him news of his family."—"If you could bring him news of the Pope," said he, "I would not introduce you to his chamber just now, for he is composing; and when that is the case, we must take care not to disturb his imagination: he will not be visible till noon; so that you may go and take a turn, and come back about that time."

'I took his advice, and walked through the city the whole morning, thinking continually on the reception I should meet with from my uncle, who I imagined would be extremely glad to see me; I judged of his sentiments by my own; and preparing myself for a very tender scene, returned to his lodgings, with all diligence, at the hour prescribed. "You are come in the very nick of time," said his valet; "for my master is just going out; stay here a minute, and I will let him know you are come." So saying, he left me in an outward room; and, returning in a moment, conducted me into the chamber of his master, whose face had so much of our family air in it, that I was struck with the resemblance, and could not help thinking it was my very uncle Thomas, whom I had left home. Having saluted him with profound respect, I told him I was the son of Master Nicholas de la Fuenta, barber in Olmedo; that I had worked at my father's business these three weeks at Madrid in quality of a journeyman; and that I intended to make the tour of Spain for my improvement. While I spoke, my uncle seemed to muse, considering, in all likelihood, whether he should disown me for his nephew, or get rid of me in a more dexterous manner. He chose this last method, and affect-

ing a smiling air, said, "Well, my friend, how do thy father and uncles? I hope they are in good circumstances." Upon this, I began to describe the plentiful propagation of our family; I told him the names of all the children, male and female, and even comprehended in that list, their godfathers and godmothers. He did not seem to interest himself infinitely in my detail, but coming to his purpose, replied, "Diego, I approve very much of thy resolution to travel, in order to make thee perfect in thy profession; and I advise thee to leave Madrid as soon as possible: it is a pernicious place for youth, in which thou wilt be ruined, my child; it will be more for thy advantage to reside in some of the other cities of the kingdom, where people's morals are not so much corrupted. Go," added he, "and when thou art ready to set out, come and see me again; I will give thee a pistole, to help thee to make the tour of Spain." With these words, he pushed me gently out of his chamber, and sent me about my business.

'I had not sense enough to perceive that he wanted to remove me at a good distance from him; but going to our shop, gave my master an account of what had passed; he was as far from discovering the intention of Signior Don Pedro as I was, and said, "I am not at all of thy uncle's opinion: instead of advising you to travel, he ought rather, I think, to make it your interest to stay in this city; for, being intimate with so many persons of quality, he can easily settle you in some great family, and put you in a condition to make your fortune." Struck with this discourse, which flattered my imagination, in two days I went back to my uncle, and proposed, that he

should employ his credit to procure admission for me into the family of some lord belonging to the court. But this proposal was not at all to his liking: a vain man, like him, who had free access to the great, and ate every day at their tables, could not brook his nephew's sitting with the servants, while he dined with their lords: in this case, little Diego would have made Signior Don Pedro blush. He did not fail, therefore, to refuse my request, and that not in the most civil manner. "How! you little vagabond," said he, with a furious look, "wouldst thou quit thy profession! Go; I abandon thee to those who have given thee such pernicious counsel: get out of my apartment, and never set foot in it again, otherwise I will cause thee to be chastised as thou deservest." Confounded at these words, and still more at the tone in which they were delivered, I retired, with the tear in my eye, very much affected at his harsh behaviour; but as I was naturally brisk and haughty, I soon dried my tears; my grief changed to indignation, and I resolved to take no farther notice of this unkind relation, without whose assistance I had hitherto made shift to live.

'My whole thought being now bent on cultivating my talent, I applied to business, shaved all day long, and in the evening learned to play on the guitar, by way of recreation. My master for that instrument was an old Signior Escudero,* whose beard I trimmed, and who taught me music; which he understood perfectly well, having been formerly chorister in a cathedral: his name was Marcos de Obregon, a sage person,

* Escudero is a squire to wait on a gentlewoman.

who had a large stock of sense as well as experience, and loved me as well as if I had been his own child. He served in quality of usher to a physician's wife, who lived within thirty paces of our house, whither I used to go in the twilight, when we had left off working; and sitting together on the threshold of the door, we used to make a little concert, not at all disagreeable to the neighbours; not that our voices were exquisite, but while we thrummed upon the instrument, each of us, in our turn, accompanied it with singing, and that was sufficient to please our audience. In particular, we diverted Donna Mergellina, the physician's wife, who used to come into the passage to hear us, and sometimes made us repeat the airs that were most to her liking, her husband not being offended at her enjoying this diversion; for though he was a Spaniard, and already well stricken in years, he was not jealous: his profession engrossed him wholly, and as he returned fatigued from his patients in the evening, he went to bed betimes, without being alarmed at his wife's attention to our concerts; it is probable, indeed, that he did not think them capable of making dangerous impressions; and we must observe, that he imagined he had little or no cause to fear, Mergellina being young and handsome, it is true, but withal so savagely virtuous, that she could not so much as endure the look of a man. He did not, therefore, begrudge her a pastime that seemed so innocent and honourable, but left us to sing as much as we pleased. One evening when I came to the physician's door, with an intention to play as usual, I found the old squire expecting me, who, taking me by the hand, said he wanted

to take a turn with me before we should begin our concert; then leading me into a bystreet, where he found we could talk with freedom, "Son Don Diego," said he, with a melancholy air, "I have something extraordinary to disclose. I am afraid, my child, that we both shall have cause to repent of amusing ourselves, in the evening, with concerts at my master's door. I have, doubtless, a great friendship for you, and am very well pleased with having taught you to play upon the guitar, and sing; but, had I foreseen the misfortune that threatens us, please God, I would have given you your lessons in some other place!"—Frightened at this discourse, I begged the usher to be more explicit, and tell me what we had to fear; for I was not a man who could brave danger; nor had I, as yet, made the tour of Spain. "I will," said he, "tell you what is necessary to be known, that you may comprehend the jeopardy in which we are. When I entered into the service of the physician, which is about a year ago, he said to me one morning, after having brought me into the presence of his wife, "Marcos, behold your mistress; this is the lady whom you are to attend everywhere." 'I admired Donna Mergellina; I thought her wonderful pretty, excessively handsome, and was particularly charmed with the agreeable air that diffused itself through her whole mien. "Sir," answered I to the physician, "I am too happy in being permitted to serve such a charming lady."—Mergellina, disgusted at my answer, said, in a passion, "A pretty fellow, indeed! methinks you take a great deal of liberty. I want none of your compliments—not I!" Such words, from a mouth [illegible]

agreeable, surprised me very much; I could not reconcile this rustic and insolent manner of speaking with the gentle appearance of my mistress: but her husband, who was used to it, rejoiced at his having a wife of such a rare character, told me that his spouse was a prodigy of virtue; and, perceiving that she put on her veil, and prepared to go to mass, bade me conduct her to church. We were no sooner in the street, than we met, which is not at all extraordinary, several gentlemen, who, struck with the fine air of Donna Mergellina, paid her a great many compliments *en passant*. She replied to them all; but you cannot imagine how silly and ridiculous her answers were. Every body was astonished, and could not conceive that there was a woman in the world who could be displeased with praise.—"Madam," said I to her, "take no notice of what is said to you; it is better to keep silence, than to speak in passion."—"No, no," answered she, "I will let these insolent fellows know that I wont be treated with disrespect." In short, so much impertinence escaped her, that I could not help telling her my sentiments, at the hazard of her displeasure. I represented to her, as delicately as I could, that she perverted nature, and spoiled a thousand good qualities, by her savage humour; that a woman of politeness and good nature might inspire love without the help of beauty; whereas, the handsomest person in the world, without meekness and good breeding, would become the object of contempt. I strengthened these arguments with many more of the same kind, calculated for the reformation of her behaviour; and after having moralized a

good deal, I was afraid my freedom would enrage my mistress, and bring upon me some severe repartee: nevertheless, she did not rebel against any remonstrance, but contented herself with neglecting it entirely, as well as all the rest that I was afterwards foolish enough to make.

"At length, I forbore to advise her of her faults, and abandoned her to the ferocity of her nature. Meanwhile, (would you believe it?) this ferocious disposition, this haughty woman, is, within these two months, entirely changed; she is complaisant to every body, and her behaviour most agreeable; she is not the same Mergellina who made such silly answers to the men that said obliging things to her; she is become sensible to praise; loves to be called handsome, and told that a man cannot behold her with impunity; and flattery is now as agreeable to her as to any other woman: the change is scarce credible; and, what will surprise you still more, you are the author of such a great miracle! Yes, my dear Diego," continued the usher, "you have metamorphosed Donna Mergellina in this manner, and converted that tigress into a lamb. In one word, you have attracted her regard. I have perceived it more than once, and am very much mistaken in the sex, if she has not conceived a most violent passion for you. This, my child, is the sad piece of news I had to disclose, and the troublesome dilemma in which we are."

"I can't see," said I to the old man, "that we have so much cause to be afflicted at this affair; or, that it is a misfortune for me to be beloved by a handsome lady."—"Ah, Diego!" he replied, "you talk like a young man: you look only at

the bait, without perceiving the hook; you consider only the pleasure, but I foresee the disagreeable consequences. All will come to light in the end. If you continue coming to sing at our door, you will inflame the passion of Mergellina, who, perhaps, losing all restraint, will betray her weakness before her husband, Dr. Oloroso: and he who appears so complaisant at present, because he believes he has no reason to be jealous, will become furious, revenge himself upon her, and in all probability, make both you and me feel the effects of his rage."—"Why, truly," said I, "Signior Marcos, your reasons are convincing; and I submit myself wholly to your advice; give me, therefore, directions how to behave, in order to prevent mischief."—"We have nothing to do," answered he, "but to give over our concert: appear no more before my mistress; and when you are no longer seen, she will retrieve her quiet. Stay at your master's house, whither I will come, and we will play on the guitar without danger."—"With all my heart," said I; "and I promise never to set foot within your door again." I resolved, in good earnest, to be as good as my word; and, for the future, to keep myself close in the shop, since the sight of me was so dangerous.

'In the mean time, honest Marcos, with all his prudence, found, in a very few days, that the means he had contrived to extinguish the flame of Donna Mergellina, produced a quite contrary effect. This lady, not having heard me sing for two nights successively, asked him why we had discontinued our concert, and for what reason I no longer appeared. He replied, I was so busy that I had not a moment to bestow on my pla-

sures. She seemed satisfied with this excuse, and for three days more supported my absence with fortitude enough; but at the end of that time, my princess lost all patience, and said to her squire, "You deceive me, Marcos, Diego must have some other reason for not coming hither: there is some mystery in it, which I must have explained; speak, therefore, I order you, and conceal nothing of the truth."—"Madam," answered he, making use of another expedient, "since you must know the truth, I will tell you, that he commonly found supper over, when he went home, after our concert; and he does not choose to run the risk of going to bed with an empty stomach."—"How! with an empty stomach!" cried she, with the marks of uneasiness; "why had not you told me this sooner? Go to bed supperless! Poor baby! Go to him instantly; and bring him hither this very evening. He shan't go to bed with an empty stomach; there shall always be a plate of something reserved for him."

"What do I hear?" said the usher, affecting surprise at her discourse; "Heavens, what a change! Is it you, Madam, that talks thus? How long have you been thus gentle and compassionate?"—"How long!" replied she hastily, "since your abode in this house; or rather since you condemned my disdainful carriage, and laboured to soften the roughness of my behaviour. But alas!" added she in a melting tone, "I have passed from one extremity to another! from being haughty and insensible, I am become too soft and tender! I love your young friend Diego, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary; and his absence, instead of weakening, adds new vigour to my love!"—"Is it possible," said the old man, "that

a lad who is neither handsome nor genteel, should be the object of such a violent passion? I would forgive your sentiments, had they been inspired by some gentleman of shining accomplishments."—"Ah, Marcos!" said Mergellina, interrupting him, "I don't resemble the rest of my sex—or rather, notwithstanding all your long experience, you are but little acquainted with women, if you think that merit always determines their choice. If I may be allowed to judge by myself, deliberation has no share in their engagements; love is a disorder of the mind, by which we are involuntarily dragged and fastened to the object; it is a distemper by which we are seized, as dogs are with madness: cease, therefore, to represent Diego as unworthy of my tenderness; let it suffice, that my love finds in him a thousand good qualities which escape you notice, and perhaps only exist in my imagination. It is in vain for you to tell me, that neither his features nor his make deserve the least attention: he seems to me born to captivate, and fairer than the day! besides, he has a sweetness of voice that charms me, and in my opinion plays on the guitar with a grace peculiar to himself."—"But, Madam," replied Marcos, "do you consider who this Diego is? the meanness of his condition?"—"Mine is not much higher than his;" said she, interrupting him again: "And if I was even a woman of quality, that should be no objection."

'The result of this conversation was, that the usher thinking he should make little progress with his remonstrances, ceased to oppose the infatuation of his mistress; as an expert pilot yields to the storm that drives him from the port in view. He did more for the satisfaction of his patroness;

for, coming to me, he took me aside, and having recounted what passed between her and him; "You see, Diego," added he, "that we cannot help continuing our concert at Mergellina's door. There is a necessity for that lady's seeing you again, my friend: otherwise she will commit some piece of indiscretion that may do infinite prejudice to her reputation." I was not hard hearted; but told Marcos, I would in the twilight repair to the place of assignation with my guitar; and that he might go and regale his mistress with this agreeable piece of news. In this he did not fail; and that passionate innamorato was ravished to understand, that she should have the pleasure of seeing and hearing me that very evening.

'A disagreeable accident, however, had well nigh balked her expectation; for I could not leave the shop before night; which, for my sins, was extremely dark; and as I groped along the street, and had got about half way to the place of rendezvous, I was crowned from a window with the contents of a perfuming pan, that did not at all delight my sense of smelling, though I may safely say I lost none of it, so exactly was I equipt. In this condition, I did not know what course to take. Had I returned to the shop, I should have afforded a very diverting scene to my comrades, and exposed myself to a thousand unsavoury jests; and I was shocked at the thought of going in this fine pickle to Mergellina: the last, however, I resolved upon; and going to the physician's house, found the old squire waiting for me at the door. When he told me, that Dr. Oloroso being in bed, we might freely divert ourselves. I answered, I must first clean my clothes: and then related my misfortune. He sympathized with me,

and conducted me into a hall where his mistress was; who no sooner learned my adventure, and saw my condition, than she grieved for me as much as if I had met with the greatest misfortune; and bestowed a thousand curses on the person who had thus accommodated me. "But Madam," said Marcos to her, "moderate your transports; and consider that this event, being the pure effect of chance, ought not to be so deeply resented."—"Why should not I," answered she, "deeply resent the injury that has been done to this poor lamb, this dove without gall, who does not even complain of the outrage he has received? O that I was a man this moment to revenge it!"

'She said a thousand things more that denoted the excess of her love, which she made appear no less by her actions; for while Marcos was busied in wiping me with a towel, she ran to her chamber, and fetched from it a box full of all sorts of perfumes; sweetening my clothes with the scent of odoriferous drugs which she burned, and afterwards sprinkling them all over with essences. The fumigation and aspersion performed, this charitable lady went herself into the kitchen for some bread, wine, and slices of roasted mutton, which she had set apart for my entertainment; and obliging me to eat, took pleasure in serving me, sometimes by cutting my victuals, and sometimes by filling wine, in spite of all that Marcos and I could say to dissuade her from such condescension. When I had supped, we gentlemen of the band began to tune our voices to our guitars, and performed a concert that charmed Mergellina. We affected, indeed, to sing those airs, the words of which flattered her passion; and it must be observed, that while I sung, I frequently ogled her

with the tail of my eye, in such a manner, as blew the coals of love; for I began to be pleased with the game. Although the concert lasted a long time, I was not at all tired; and, as for the lady, to whom the hours seemed minutes, she would willingly have spent the night in hearing us, had not the old usher, to whom the minutes seemed hours, put her in mind of its being late. This she gave him the trouble to repeat ten or twelve times; but she had to do with one who was indefatigable on that subject, and who gave her no rest until I was gone. This experienced person, seeing his mistress abandoned to a foolish passion, was afraid of some cross accident: and his fear was soon justified; for the doctor, either suspecting some secret intrigue, or agitated by the demon of jealousy, who had respected him hitherto, took it in his head to find fault with our concerts; and without giving any reason for his disgust, declared that for the future he would suffer no stranger to come within his doors.

"Marcos advertised me of this declaration, which was particularly intended for me, and mortified me not a little; for I had conceived hopes I was sorry to forego. Nevertheless, that I may act the faithful historian, I will own that I bore my misfortune with patience. This was not the case with Mergellina, whose sentiments were more inflamed than ever. "My dear Marcos," said she to her usher, "from you alone I expect assistance; fall upon some method, I beg of you, to bring Diego and me together in private."—"What do you ask?" cried the old man in a rage, "I have been already but too complaisant, and will not undertake, by gratifying your silly passion, to dishonour my master, ruin your reputa-

tion, and entail infamy upon myself. I, who have always maintained the character of an irreproachable domestic! I will rather quit your family, than serve you in such a shameful manner."— "Ah! Marcos!" cried the lady, interrupting him, and frightened at his last words, "you pierce my very heart when you talk of leaving me! Cruel man! are you going to forsake me now, after having reduced me to this condition! Give me back my former pride, and that savageness of disposition you have deprived me of! Why do I not still possess these happy defects, which would have preserved my tranquillity! whereas, your indiscreet remonstrances have robbed me of the repose I enjoyed! you have corrupted my morals, by endeavouring to correct them. But what do I say," added she, "wretch that I am! why do I reproach you unjustly! No, my father; you are not the author of my misfortune, which cruel fate alone decrees! don't therefore take notice, I conjure you, of the extravagant discourse that escapes me! Alas! my passion disorders my understanding! have pity on my weakness! you are all my comfort; and if you have any regard for my life, do not refuse your assistance."

'At these words, her tears redoubling in such a manner that she could not go on, she covered her face with her handkerchief, and threw herself upon a chair, like a person sinking under affliction. Old Marcos, who was perhaps the best soul of an usher that ever lived, could not resist such a moving sight, which affected him so much, that he even mingled his tears with those of his mistress, and said, with an air of tenderness, "Ah, Madam, how bewitching you are! I am not proof

against your sorrow! my virtue is vanquished, and I promise you my assistance. I am not surprised that love has been able to make you forget your duty, when pity alone has severed me from mine." Accordingly, the usher, in spite of his irreproachable conduct, devoted himself very obligingly to the passion of Mergellina; and having come one morning to inform me of what had happened, told me at parting, that he had already concerted a plan for procuring a secret interview between the lady and me. This reanimated my hope; but in less than two hours after, I received a piece of very bad news. A journeyman apothecary in the neighbourhood, one of our customers, came in to be shaved, and while I prepared the lather, said, "Signior Diego, what is the matter with your old friend, the old squire, Marcos de Obregon? Do you know that he is going to leave Dr. Oloroso?" Upon my answering in the negative, he resumed, "It is certainly true: he is to be dismissed this very day. His master and mine have been just talking on that subject while I was by, and, to the best of my remembrance, their conversation was thus: "Signior Apuntador," said the physician, "I have a favour to ask: being dissatisfied with an old usher who has served me some time, I want to put my wife under the direction of a faithful, severe, and vigilant duenna."—"I understand you," said my master, interrupting him, "you have occasion for Dame Melancia, who was my wife's governante, and has lived in the family these six weeks that I have been a widdower: though she is very useful to me in house-keeping, I yield her to you, on account of my concern for your honour. You may depend

upon her for the safety of your forehead; she is a jewel of a duenna;* and a very dragon to guard the chastity of the female sex: during the whole term of twelve years that she was with my wife, who, you know, was both young and handsome, I never saw so much as the shadow of a gallant in my house. No, faith! it was no place for them to play pranks in; and, let me tell you, the defunct, in the beginning, had a strong propensity to coquetry; but Dame Melancia soon reclaimed, and inspired her with a taste for virtue. In a word, she is a treasure, and you will thank me more than once for the present I make of her." The Doctor was rejoiced at this encomium; and Signior Apuntador and he are agreed, that the duenna shall this very day fill the place of the old usher."

'This piece of news, which I believed, and was certainly true, disturbed the ideas of pleasure with which I had begun again to regale myself; and Marcos, in the afternoon, confounded them effectually, by confirming the report of the journeyman-apothecary. "My dear Diego," said the honest usher, "I am very glad that Dr. Oloroso has dismissed me; a circumstance that spares me a great deal of trouble: for I not only found myself engaged in a bad employment, but likewise under the necessity of contriving tricks and stratagems to bring Margellina and you together in private. What a dilemma had I brought myself into! Thank heaven, I am freed from those troublesome cares, and the dangers that attend them! For your part, my

* Duennas, are females of approved fidelity, to whose care the Spaniards intrust the chastity of their wives and daughters.

son, you ought to console yourself for the loss of a few sweet moments, which might have been followed by numberless sorrows." I relished the reflection of Marcos, because I no longer had any hopes, and thought no more of the affair. I confess, I was not one of those stubborn lovers, who are animated by the obstacles in their way; but had I been such a one, Dame Melancia was enough to make me quit my pursuit; for the character I had heard of that duenna, seemed capable of driving any gallant to despair. Nevertheless, in whatever colours she had been painted to me, I learned, two or three days after, that the Doctor's wife had either lulled this Argus, or corrupted her fidelity. As I went out to shave one of our neighbours, a decent old woman stopping me in the street, asked if my name was not Diego de la Fuenta: when I answered, "Yes"—"Well, then," said she, "you are the person I want. Come this night to Donna Mergellina's door, and make some signal by which you may be known and admitted into the house."—"Very well," said I to her, "we must first agree upon the signal. I can mimick a cat charmingly, and will mew several times."—"That's enough," replied this she-Mercury; "I will report your answer. Your servant, Signior Diego. Heaven bless you! how handsome you are! By St. Agnes, if I were but fifteen years old, I would not choose to engage you for others!" So saying, the officious beldame departed.

'You may well think that I was furiously agitated by this message. Adieu the reflection of Marcos! I expected night with the utmost impatience; and when I thought Dr. Oloroso might be asleep, went to the door, where I

mewed so loud, as to be heard at a good distance, and did great honour to the master who taught me such a polite art. In a moment, Mergellina herself having opened the door softly, and let me in, shut it again in the same manner; and we went together into the hall where our last concert was held, and which was lighted by a small lamp that glimmered in the chimney: we sat down close by one another, for the benefit of conversing more at our ease, and were both very much affected; with this difference, however, that pleasure alone was the occasion of her emotion, while mine partook a little of fear. My princess in vain assured me, that we had nothing to dread on account of her husband: I was seized with a fit of shivering that disturbed my joy. "Madam," said I to her, "how have you been able to deceive the vigilance of your governante? After what I had heard of Dame Melancia, I did not think it possible for you to find means to let me hear from you, much less to give me a personal interview." Donna Mergellina, smiling at my discourse, answered, "You will cease to be surprised at the private opportunity we now enjoy, after I have told you what passed between my duenna and me. When she came first into the family, my husband loaded her with civilities, and said to me, "Mergellina, I commit you to the care of this discreet gentlewoman, who is a summary of all the virtues; a mirror which you must always have before your eyes, for your improvement in wisdom. This admirable person governed an apothecary's wife (a friend of mine) twelve years, and that in such an uncommon manner, that she became a kind of Saint under her instruction."

"This encomium, which the severe look of Dame Melancia did not belie, cost me a world of tears, and threw me into despair. I represented to myself the lectures I must hear from morn to night, and the rebukes I must every day undergo. In short, I expected to be the most unhappy woman in the world; and thinking it needless to be on the reserve, in such a cruel state of expectation, I said to my duenna, with a resolute air, (as soon as I found myself alone with her) "You are, doubtless, preparing a great many sufferings for me; but I think proper to advertise you beforehand, that I have not a great deal of patience; and that I will endeavour to give you as many mortifications as I can: in the mean time, I declare that my heart entertains a passion which all your remonstrances shall not impair; so that you may take your measures accordingly, and redouble your vigilance; for I confess I will spare nothing to deceive it." At these words, the grim-faced duenna (who I imagined was about to give me a sample of her office) cleared up her austere countenance, and said with a smiling air, "I am charmed with your humour, your frankness encourages mine, and I see we are designed for one another. Ah, my fair Mergellina! how little are you acquainted with me, when you judge by the character your spouse the doctor gives me, and by this sour aspect I assume! I am so far from being an enemy to pleasure, that my sole motive for hiring myself as the minister of jealous husbands is, that I may the more effectually serve their handsome wives. I have long possessed the great mystery of disguising myself; and I may call myself doubly happy, because I enjoy the convenience of sin, and the reputation of

virtue at the same time. Between you and me, this is the scope of mankind in general: virtue itself is too difficult to be acquired; and therefore people are satisfied with possessing the appearance of it!

"Leave your conduct to my direction," added the governante; "and I warrant you, we will soon impose upon old Dr. Oloroso, who, by my troth, shall soon share the fate of Signior Apuntador; for I don't see why the forehead of a physician should be more respected than that of an apothecary. Poor Apuntador! how many tricks his wife and I have played him! She was a lovely creature! a good-humoured soul, heaven rest it! I can assure you, she made a good use of her youth, and did not want abundance of admirers, whom I introduced to the house without ever being discovered by her husband: look upon me, therefore, madam, with a more favourable eye, and be persuaded, that whatever talent the old squire might have for your service, you will lose nothing by the change, and perhaps find me still more useful than he was."

"I leave you to judge, Diego," continued Mergellina, "how much I thought myself obliged to the duenna for this frank declaration; for I looked upon her as a person of the most austere virtue; so apt are people to be deceived in women. Her sincerity gained my heart in a moment: I embraced her in a transport of joy, that convinced her how much I was charmed with my lot, in having her for a governante; and afterwards freely imparted my sentiments to her, and begged that she would, without loss of time, contrive a private meeting with you; which she has not failed to procure. This very morning

she set at work that old woman who spoke to you, and who is an agent whom she often employed for the apothecary's wife. But the most pleasant part of this adventure," added she, laughing, "is, that Melancia, understanding from me that my husband commonly sleeps sound, has gone to bed to him, and this very minute supplies my place."—"So much the worse, madam," said I to Mergellina, "I cannot approve of this invention; your husband may wake and perceive the cheat."—"He cannot perceive it," answered she, with some precipitation; "don't be uneasy on that score; nor let a groundless panic poison the delight you ought to enjoy with a young lady who has a regard for you."

'The old doctor's wife observing that I was still dismayed, notwithstanding her assurance, did every thing in her power to encourage me; and practised so many different endeavours for that purpose, that she succeeded at last, and I resolved to profit by the occasion; but just as Cupid, attended by the sports and smiles, was about to crown my happiness, we were astonished by a loud rap at the street-door. Immediately love and his train took wing, like a flock of fearful birds, dispersed by sudden noise! Mergellina concealed me in a hurry under a table that was in the hall; then blowing out the lamp, as it had been agreed upon between her governante and her, in case such a cross accident should happen, she went to the chamber where her husband was a-bed. In the mean time, the whole house rung with the repeated knocks that were thundered at the door; and the doctor, starting out of his sleep, called Melancia. The duenna, jumping out of bed, (although the doctor who mistook

her for his wife, bid her lie still) joined her mistress in the dark; who, feeling her, called Melancia also, and bid her go and see who knocked at the door: "Madam," answered the governante, "I am here. Go to bed again, if you please, and I will go and see what is the matter. Meanwhile Mergellina, having undressed, slipped into bed to the doctor, who had not the least suspicion of the trick. "It is true, indeed, this scene was performed in the dark by two actresses, one of whom was matchless in her way, and the other an admirable proficient.

'The duenna, wrapped in a *robe de chambre*, appearing soon after with a lighted candle in her hand, said to her master, "Signior Doctor, be so good as to rise: the bookseller, Fernandez de Buendia, our neighbour, has fallen into an apoplexy, and you are desired to go with all haste to his assistance." The physician dressed himself as soon as he could, and went away; while his wife, in a loose gown, came along with the duenna into the hall where I was, and drawing me from under the table, more dead than alive, "You have nothing to fear, Diego," said she; "recollect yourself." Then, in a few words, she told me what had happened, and wanted to renew the conversation which had been interrupted; but this the governante opposed, saying, "Madam, perhaps your husband will find the bookseller dead, and return immediately. Besides," added she, perceiving me benumbed with fear, "what would you do with this poor lad? he is in no condition to maintain the conference, which you had better defer till to-morrow.' Donna Mergellina consented to this proposal, not without regret; so well did she love the present

time: and I believe she was very much mortified, that she could not then bestow upon the doctor the new cap she had destined for him.

As for my own part, less sorry for having been balked of love's most precious favours, than glad to be out of danger, I went back to my master's house, where I spent the night in reflecting upon my adventure. I hesitated some time about going to the place of rendezvous next night, having as bad an opinion of the second enterprise as of the first; but the devil, who is always laying close siege to us, or rather, on such occasions, takes possession of our faculties, suggested, that I should be a great booby to stop short in the middle of such a delightful journey; representing to my fancy Mergellina adorned with new charms, and heightened the value of the pleasures that awaited me: so that I resolved to pursue my point; and, flattering myself with the hope of behaving with more courage than before, I repaired, in this disposition, to the doctor's door, between eleven and twelve next night, which was so dark, that not one star appeared in the firmament. I mewed two or three times, to give notice that I was in the street; and nobody coming to the door, I not only repeated the signal, but also mimicked all the different expressions of a cat, which a shepherd of Olmedo had taught me; and acquitted myself so well, that a neighbour going home, and mistaking me for one of those animals whose notes I imitated, took up a flint stone he found at his feet, and threw it at me with his whole strength, crying, "Curse on the caterwauler!" I received the blow upon my head, which stunned me so much, that I had well nigh tumbled backwards. I felt myself

wounded; a circumstance sufficient to give me a disgust at gallantry; and, losing my love with my blood, returned to our house, where I alarmed and raised the whole family. My master examined and dressed my wound, which he thought dangerous; but it was attended with no bad consequence, and in three weeks disappeared. During all that time, I heard not one syllable about Mergellina; and it is not unlikely that Dame Melancia, in order to detach her from me, introduced her to some better acquaintance. But this gave me no concern: for as soon as I found myself perfectly cured, I left Madrid, in order to perform my tour of Spain.'

CHAPTER VII.

Gil Blas and his companion come up with a man whom they perceive soaking crusts of bread in a spring; and enter into conversation with him.

Signior Diego de la Fuenta recounted a good many more adventures that had happened to him; but in my opinion, so little worth the breath they cost, that I shall pass them over in silence; though I was obliged to hear the recital, which was so tedious, that it brought us as far as Ponte de Duera. In this village we staid the remaining part of the day; and, at the inn where we lodged, ordered for supper a dish of cabbage-soup, and a roasted hare, the species of which we were at great pains to prove beforehand. On the morrow, at break of day, we pursued our journey, after

having replenished our bottle with pretty good wine, and furnished our knapsack with some slices of bread, and the half of the hare which remained from our supper.

When we had gone about two leagues, we began to be hungry; and perceiving several large trees, which formed an agreeable shade in the fields, about two hundred paces from the highway, we went thither to make a halt, and found a man, seven or eight and twenty years old, soaking some crusts in a fountain. A long sword lay by him on the grass, with a haversack, of which he unloaded his shoulders; and, though he was poorly clothed, he discovered a good shape and mien. We accosted him in a civil manner; upon which he saluted us with great complaisance, and presenting his crusts, asked, with a smile, if we would be of his mess: we answered, yes, provided he would give us leave to improve the repast, by joining our breakfast with his. He freely consenting, we immediately produced our victuals, which afforded no unpleasing view to the stranger, who cried, in a transport of joy, 'How, gentlemen! egad, there's store of munition for the belly! I see you are a provident people; for my own part, I seldom travel so well provided, but depend a good deal upon chance. Notwithstanding my present situation, however, I may say without vanity that I sometimes make a pretty brilliant appearance. You must know, that I am usually treated like a prince, and have guards in my train.'—'I understand you,' said Diego, 'you would intimate that you are a player?'—'You have hit it,' replied the other; 'I have acted these fifteen years at least; for I performed some parts while I was yet a child.'—'To be plain with

you,' said the barber, shaking his head, 'I can scarce believe what you say. I know what sort of people the comedians are; these gentlemen don't travel a-foot, and dine with St. Anthony, as you do; therefore I cannot help thinking that you are no more than a candle-snuffer.'—'You may think of me as you please,' replied the stage-player; 'but I affirm that I act the very top parts, and among the rest, that of the lover.'—'If that be the case,' said my comrade, 'I congratulate you upon it; and am very proud that Signior Gil Blas and I have the honour to breakfast with a person of such importance.'

We then began to gnaw our crusts, and the precious remains of the hare, bestowing such rude embraces on the bottle, that it was empty in a very short time; and being so busy with what we were about, that we scarce spoke one word during the repast; which being ended, the conversation was thus resumed. 'I am surprised,' said the barber to the player, 'to see you in such indifferent circumstances: for a stage-hero, methinks you have a very needy appearance; you'll pardon my freedom.'—'Your freedom!' cried the actor, 'ah! truly, you are little acquainted with Melchior Zapata. Thank heaven, I am not at all exceptious! you do me a pleasure in speaking so frankly; for I myself love to tell my mind without reserve. I sincerely own I am not rich.—Look,' added he, showing that his doublet was lined with play-bills, 'this is the stuff that usually serves me for lining; and if you have any curiosity to see my wardrobe, it shall be forthwith gratified.' At the same time he took out of his knapsack an old suit laced with tinsel, a sorry hat with some old plumes of feathers, a pair of silk stockings full

of holes, and red buskins very much worn. 'You see,' said he, 'I am tolerably poor.'—'That's what surprises me,' replied Diego. 'So you have neither wife nor daughter?'—'I have a wife, young and handsome,' said Zapata;' 'yet I am never a bit the better for it; so wonderfully capricious is my fate. I married a beautiful actress, in hopes that she would not let me starve; and, unfortunately for me, she is incorruptibly chaste. Who the devil would have been deceived as I was? there happened to be but one virtuous woman among the strollers, and she must fall to my lot!' 'Truly you have had bad luck,' said the barber; 'but why did you not marry an actress of the king's company at Madrid, in which case you could not have been disappointed?' I grant it, replied the player; 'but a plague upon it! a little country stroller dares not aspire to those famous heroines; that is as much as an actor of the prince's company can do; some of whom are obliged to match in the city. Luckily for them, the city is well stored, and they often light on yoke-fellows not a whit inferior to those princesses who were brought up behind the scenes.'

'Have you never endeavoured,' said my companion to him, 'to be introduced into that company? Must one have infinite merit to be admitted into it?' 'Good!' replied Melchior, 'you are merry with your infinite merit. It is composed of twenty actors: ask their characters in town, and you will hear them finely handled. More than one half deserve to carry the knapsack still; but, for all that, it is no easy matter to be received among them. One must have money, or powerful friends, to supply the want of talents. This I ought to know, since I am just come from making

a trial at Madrid, where I have been hooted and hissed in a hellish manner, although I deserved to be applauded to the skies; for I roared, ranted, burlesqued Nature a hundred times; and moreover, in my declamation, clapped my clenched fist to my princess's nose. In a word, I performed in the taste of the great actors in vogue; and yet the same audience that relished this behaviour in them, could not endure it in me. You see the force of prejudice! Wherefore, finding myself incapable of pleasing on that stage, and having nothing to secure my reception in defiance of the town, I am going back to Zamora, where I shall rejoin my wife and comrades, who are not in the most flourishing circumstances. God grant that we may not be obliged to beg our way to the next town! a misfortune which has already happened to us more than once.'

With these words, this prince of the drama sprung up, shouldered his knapsack, girded on his sword, and, at parting, pronounced, with a theatrical air, 'Gentlemen, adieu! may the gods exhaust their bounties on you!' 'And you,' replied Diego, 'may you, at your return to Zamora, behold your wife's condition and temper changed.' Signior Zapata no sooner showed his heels, than he began to rehearse as he walked, and immediately the barber and I hissed, to put him in mind of his trial: the noise reaching his ears, he thought he still heard the cat-calls of Madrid; upon which he looked back, and perceiving that we made merry at his expense, far from being incensed at our buffoonery, took all in good part, and continued his noise, bursting into fits of laughter all the way. We returned his mirth

with all our might; and, getting back into the high road, pursued our journey.

CHAPTER IX.

The condition in which Diego finds his family; and an account of the rejoicings: after which, Gil Blas bids him farewell.

Having slept that night between Moyados and Valpuesta, in a little village whose name I have forgot, we arrived next day, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, in the plain of Olmedo. 'Signior Gil Blas,' said my comrade, 'there is the place of my nativity, which I cannot behold again without transport; so natural is it to love one's country.'—'Signior Diego,' answered I, 'one who expresses such regard for his native country, might, I think, have spoken of it a little more advantageously than you have done: Olmedo seems to be a city, and you told me it was only a village. It ought, at least, to be dignified with the epithet of a market-town.' 'I beg its pardon,' replied the barber; 'but I must own, that after having seen Madrid, Toledo, Saragossa, and all the great cities I touched at in making my tour of Spain, I look upon the small ones as villages.' As we advanced into the plain, we thought we observed a great concourse of people near Olmedo; and when we were near enough to discern objects, we found something to attract our attention.

There were three tents pitched at a small dis-

tance from one another, and hard by a great number of cooks and scullions preparing a feast: some laid cloth on long tables, placed under the tents; some filled earthen pitchers with wine; others made the pots boil, and others again turned spits that were loaded with all sorts of meat: but what I considered more attentively than all the rest, was a great stage, raised and adorned with decorations of painted paper of different colours, and garnished with Greek and Latin devices. The barber no sooner perceived the inscriptions, than he said, 'All these Greek mottoes savour strongly of my uncle Thomas, who, I'll hold a wager, has had a hand in the business: for, between you and me, he is a learned man, and has a power of college-books by heart; his greatest fault is, that he incessantly quotes passages from them in conversation, which is not agreeable to every body. Besides,' added he, 'my uncle has translated a good many Greek and Latin authors, and is quite master of the ancients, as one may see by the learned remarks which he has made: had it not been for him, we should never have known, that in the city of Athens children cried when they were flogged; we owe that discovery to his profound erudition.'

After my comrade and I had observed all those things which I have mentioned, we were curious to know the cause of such preparations, and went forward to inquire, when Diego recognised in the director of the feast, Signior Thomas de la Fuenta, whom he accosted with great eagerness. The school-master did not, at first, know the young barber; so much was he altered during an absence of ten years: but recollecting him at last, he embraced him affectionately, saying, 'What!

do I see thee then, Diego, my dear nephew? Do I see thee returned to the town where thou first savest the light? Thou art come to revisit thy household gods; and heaven restores thee safe and sound to thy kindred! O day, thrice and four times happy! O day, worthy to be marked with a white stone! A world of changes have happened, my friend, pursued he; 'thy uncle Pedro, the poet, has fallen a victim to Pinto, having died three months ago. That miser, while alive, was afraid of wanting the necessaries of life, *Argenti pallebat amore:* for though he received large pensions from several grandees, he did not spend ten pistoles a year for his subsistence, and was even served by a valet whom he did not maintain. That fool, more senseless than the Grecian Aristippus, who ordered his slaves to throw away, in the deserts of Africa, the riches they carried, as a burden that incommoded them in their march: he, I say, heaped up all the gold and silver he could scrape together; and for whom? for those very heirs he would not so much as see. He died worth thirty thousand ducats, which thy father, thy uncle Bertrand, and I, have equally shared among us: so that we are able to settle our children to our heart's desire. My brother Nicolas has already disposed of thy sister Theresa, whom he has given in marriage to the son of one of our alcaldes. *Connubio junxit stabili, propriumque dicavit.* These nuptials, performed under the most happy auspices, we have celebrated these two days with such preparation; three tents being pitched in the plain, one for each of the three heirs of Pedro, who, in their turns, bear the expense of the day. I wish thou hadst arrived sooner, to have seen the beginning of our rejoicings. The day

before yesterday, when they were married, thy father gave a sumptuous entertainment, which was followed by a course at the ring: thy uncle, the mercer, treated yesterday, and regaled us with a pastoral feast; ten of the genteelest youths, and as many handsome maidens, were dressed like shepherds, all the ribands and points in his shop being employed to adorn them. This gay company performed several dances, and sung a thousand light and tender catches: nevertheless, though nothing was ever more gallant, the spectators did not seem to relish it, which shows that pastoral is quite out of date.

'To-day,' added he, 'every thing is to be at my cost; and I will exhibit to the inhabitants of Olmedo a show of my own invention. *Finis coronabit opus.* I have ordered a theatre to be raised, on which (God willing) I will make my scholars represent a piece, of my own composing, entitled, The Diversions of Muley Bugentuff, King of Morocco. It will be extremely well acted, because I have scholars who declaim like the players of Madrid: they are the sons of fashionable people living at Pennafiel and Segovia, who are boarded with me, and are become excellent actors under my instruction. Their performance will appear to be of a masterly stamp, *ut ita dicam.* With regard to the piece, I shall say nothing, that thou mayest enjoy the pleasure of surprise; but only observe, that it must transport the spectators: for it is one of those tragic subjects which wake the soul by the images of death they present to the view. I am of Aristotle's opinion, that the chief end of tragedy is to raise terror. Oh! if I had attached myself to the drama, I would have introduced none but bloody-minded princes and he-

roic assassins on the scene, and would have bathed myself in gore: and in my tragedies, not only the principal persons, but even their guards should have perished. I would have murdered them all, to the very prompter. In a word, my taste is horror; and we see that such poems captivate the multitude, support the luxury of the players, and enable the author to live at his ease.'

Just as he had done speaking, we saw coming out of the village into the plain a great concourse of men and women. These were no other than the new-married couple, accompanied by their relations and friends, and preceded by ten or twelve musicians, who playing all together, performed a most thundering concert. We went up to meet them, and Diego made himself known; upon which, the whole assembly broke out into shouts of joy, and every one was eager to embrace him; so that he was sufficiently employed in receiving their expressions of friendship. His whole family, as well as all who were present, having well nigh smothered him with caresses, his father said to him, 'Welcome, Diego; thou findest thy parents somewhat bettered in their circumstances, my child. I shall say no more at present, but explain myself more particularly by and by.' Meanwhile the company, advancing into the plain, repaired to the tents, and sat down to the tables that were covered; and I and my companion, whom I would not quit, dined with the bridegroom and bride, who seemed to be very well matched. The repast was pretty long, because the schoolmaster had the vanity to furnish three courses, in order to excel his brothers, who had not treated with so much magnificence.

After the banquet, all the guests expressed impatience to see the representation of Signior Thomas's piece; not doubting (as they said) that the production of such a fine genius would answer their most sanguine expectation. Accordingly, approaching the stage, before which the musicians had already taken their seats, in order to play between the acts, every body, in the most profound silence, waited for the beginning. The actors appeared on the scene, and the author, with his poem in his hand, sat down on one side, to prompt them. It was not without reason that he told us the piece was tragical; for, in the first act, the King of Morocco, by way of recreation, shot a hundred Moorish slaves with arrows: in the second, he beheaded thirty Portuguese officers, whom one of his captains had made prisoners of war; and in the third and last, this monarch, mad with his wives, sets fire with his own hand to a detached palace, in which they were shut up, and reduces them and it to ashes. The Moorish slaves, as well as the Portuguese officers, were figures of ozier, very artfully made; and the palace, composed of paper, seemed all on a flame by an artificial fire-work. This conflagration, accompanied with a thousand doleful shrieks, that seemed to issue from the midst of the flames, concluded the piece, and closed the scene in a very diverting manner. The whole plain echoed with the applause that was given to such a fine tragedy, which justified the good taste of the poet, and showed that he knew how to choose his subject.

I thought there was no more to be seen, after the diversions of Muley Bugentuff; but I was mistaken: for we were advertised of a new show

by the sound of drums and trumpets. This was a distribution of prizes: Thomas de la Fuenta, to make the feast more solemn, having ordered all his scholars (as well those who were boarded with him as the rest) to compose, and intending to bestow on those who had succeeded best, books bought at Segovia with his own coin. Immediately, therefore, two school-forms were brought upon the stage, with a press full of little books, handsomely bound; then all the actors returned upon the scene, and ranged themselves round Signior Thomas, who looked as big as the head master of a college, and held a paper in his hand, on which were written the names of those who were to obtain the prizes: this he gave to the King of Morocco, who began to read it with a loud voice; and every scholar who was called, going in a respectful manner, received a book from the pedant, who was afterwards crowned with bays, and ordered to sit down on one of the benches, that he might be exposed to the admiration of the crowd. Nevertheless, how desirous soever the schoolmaster was of sending home the spectators satisfied, he could by no means affect it, because having distributed almost all the prizes amongst the boarders, as the custom is, the mothers of some of the rest being present, were offended; and openly accused the pedant of partiality, in such a manner, that this entertainment, which had hitherto been so glorious for him, had like to have ended in mischief, like the feast of the Lapithæ.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

The arrival of Gil Blas at Madrid; with an account of the first master he served in that city.

HAVING staid some time with the young barber, I afterwards joined a merchant of Segovia, in his way through Olmedo, with four mules, on which he had transported goods to Valladolid, and was returning with them unloaded. We became acquainted on the road; and he conceived such friendship for me, that he insisted upon my lodging at his house, when we arrived at Segovia. There he detained me two days; and when I was ready to set out for Madrid, along with a carrier, he entrusted me with a letter, which he desired I would in person deliver according to the direction, without telling me that it was a recommendation. I did not fail to present it to Signior Mattheo Melendez, a woollen-draper, who lived near the Sun-gate, at the corner of the Trunk-maker's Street; and he no sooner opened it, and read the contents, than he said, with a complaisant air, 'Signior Gil Blas, Pedro Palacio, my correspondent, writes so pressingly in your behalf, that I cannot dispense with your lodging at my house. He moreover entreats me to find a place for you; and I undertake the office with pleasure, being persuaded that I shall find no difficulty in procuring for you a good settlement.'

I accepted the offer of Melendez with so much the more joy, as my finances were sensibly diminished: but I did not live long at his expense; for in eight days he gave me to know, that he had recommended me to a gentleman of his acquaintance, who wanted a valet de chambre; and that, in all probability, I should be preferred to the post. The gentleman coming in at the moment, 'Signior,' said Melendez, showing me to him, 'this is the young man I mentioned to you. He is a youth of honour and sobriety, and I can answer for his good behaviour, as much as for my own.' The cavalier having looked at me attentively, said he liked my countenance, and took me into his service. 'He may follow me now,' added he; 'and I will instruct him in his duty.' At these words, he bade the merchant good morrow, and conducting me into the great street just by St. Philip's Church, he entered a pretty good house, one wing of which he possessed; and going up five or six steps of a stair, he introduced me into a chamber, secured by two strong doors, which he opened; and in the first, I perceived a small window, grated with iron: through this chamber we went into another; where there was a bed and other furniture, more calculated for convenience than show.

If my new master considered me attentively at the house of Melendez, I examined him with great earnestness in my turn. He was a man turned of fifty, seemed to be serious and reserved, though good-natured withal; so that I conceived no bad opinion of him. He put several questions to me about my family, and being satisfied with my answers, 'Gil Blas,' said he, 'I believe thou art a sensible young fellow, and I am very glad

to have such a one in my service. As for thee, thou shalt have no cause to complain; I will give thee six rials a day, for victuals, clothes, wages and all; exclusive of some little perquisites thou mayest enjoy, and I am easily served; for I keep no table, but always dine abroad. All that thou hast to do in a morning is, to clean my clothes, and thou shalt be at thy own disposal during the rest of the day: take care only to come back early in the evening, and wait for me at the door. This is all I exact.' After having thus prescribed my duty, he took out his purse, and gave me six rials, as a beginning to fulfil articles; then going out, he locked the doors himself, and putting the keys in his pocket, 'Friend,' said he, 'don't follow me; go where you please: but be sure to be on the stair when I return in the evening.' So saying, he left me to dispose of myself as I should think proper.

'In good faith, Gil Blas,' said I to myself, 'thou couldst not have found a better master: what! to light on a man who, for brushing his clothes, and helping him to dress of a morning, gives me six rials per day, with liberty to walk and take my diversion, like a scholar during the vacation! Egad, this is the happiest of all situations! No wonder that I was so desirous of being at Madrid: I had certainly some supernatural intimation of the happiness that awaited me.' I spent the day in strolling about the streets, diverting myself with looking at every thing that was new to me, and this gave me sufficient employment. In the evening, after having supped at an eating-house not far from our lodgings, I betook myself to the place whither my master had ordered me to repair, and where he himself arrived three quarters

of an hour after me, seemingly well pleased with my punctuality. 'Very well,' said he, 'this is right: I love to see servants attentive to their duty.' So saying, he opened the doors of his apartment, and shut them again as soon as we had gone in: being in the dark, he took a tinder-box, and struck a light, by the help of which I assisted to undress him. When he was a-bed, I lighted, by his order, a lamp that stood in his chimney, and carried the candle into the anti-chamber, where I went to sleep in a bed without curtains. Next morning, he got up between nine and ten o'clock, and when I had dusted his clothes, counted me six more rials, and dismissed me till evening: after which, he went out also, not without locking his doors with great care; so we parted again for the remaining part of the day.

Such was our manner of living, which I found very agreeable; and the best joke of all was, I did not know my master's name: Melendez himself was ignorant of it, being only acquainted with him as a gentleman who came sometimes to his shop, and bought cloth of him, as he had occasion for it. Our neighbours could give me no better information; all of them assuring me, that my master was utterly unknown to them, although he had lived two years in the ward. They told me that he visited nobody in the neighbourhood; and some of them, accustomed to make rash inferences, concluded from thence, that he was no better than he should be. They went still further, suspecting him to be a spy of the King of Portugal, and charitably advertised me of that suspicion, that I might take my measures accordingly. I was disturbed at

this advice; and reflected, that if the thing was so, I should run the risk of visiting the prison of Madrid. I could not confide in my innocence, my past misfortunes having taught me to dread Justice; for I had found by experience, that if she does not put the innocent to death, she at least treats them with so little hospitality, that her lodgers are always in a very melancholy situation.

In such a delicate conjuncture I consulted Melendez, who did not know how to advise me: for if he could not believe my master was a spy, on the other hand, he had no reason to think otherwise; so that I resolved to observe my patron narrowly, and to leave him, if I should perceive that he was undoubtedly an enemy to the state; but I thought prudence, and the easiness of my place, required that I should be first perfectly sure of his practices. With this view, I began to keep a strict eye over his actions; and in order to sound him, 'Sir,' said I, one evening, while I undressed him, 'one does not know how to live, so as to avoid slander: the world is very malicious, and we, among others, are very little obliged to our neighbours. You cannot guess in what manner the malicious creatures talk of us!'—'Right, Gil Blas,' answered he: 'but what can they say of us, child?'—'Ah! truly,' I replied, 'scandal never wants matter. Virtue herself furnishes food for it. Our neighbours say, that we are dangerous people, and deserve to be taken notice of by the government. In a word, you are thought to be a spy for the King of Portugal.' While I pronounced these words, I looked hard at my master, as Alexander

eyed his physician;* and employing all my penetration to discover what effect my report produced in him, thought I observed an emotion that too well agreed with the conjectures of the neighbourhood, and he fell into a fit of musing; upon which I did not put the most favourable construction: but he soon recovered himself, and said with an air of tranquillity, 'Gil Blas, let our neighbours think as they please, without making our peace depend upon their imaginations; and since we give them no cause to think amiss of us, let their opinion give us no uneasiness.'

Upon this, he went to bed, and I followed his example, without knowing what to think of the matter. Next day, just as we were going out in the morning, we heard a loud rap at the outward door; my master opened the other, and looking through the small grate, saw a decent sort of a man at it, who said, 'Signior Cavalier, I am an alguazil, and come hither to tell you, that the corregidor would speak with you.'—'What does he want with me?' replied my patron. 'That I am ignorant of, Signior,' said the alguazil; 'but if you will take the trouble to go to his house, you will soon know.'—'I am his most humble servant,' resumed my master; 'but have no manner of business with him.' So saying, he shut the second door; and having walked up and down for some time, like one alarmed at the di-

* Alexander the Great having received a letter, intimating that his physician designed to poison him, took the cup of medicine which he prescribed, and drinking it without hesitation, put the letter into the suspected person's hand, fixing his eyes steadfastly upon him while he read it, in order to discover in his countenance the signs of innocence or guilt.

course of the alguazil, put six rials into my hand, saying, 'Gil Blas, thou mayest go out, my friend. I do not intend to go abroad so early, and have no further occasion for thee this morning.' These words made me believe, that the fear of being apprehended obliged him to stay at home; so that when I left him, in order to see if my suspicions were unjust, I hid myself in a place from whence I could see him, if he should come out; and should have had the patience to stay there the whole morning, had he not spared me the trouble. But an hour after, I saw him walking in the street, with an air of assurance, that at first confounded my penetration; but, far from being duped by those appearances, I distrusted them, having no favourable opinion of the man. I looked upon his composure as a piece of affectation, and even imagined that his remaining at home was with a view of securing his gold and jewels; and that in all probability, he would consult his safety by immediate flight. I did not expect to see him again, and hesitated about going in the evening to give my attendance at the door; so sure was I that he would quit the city instantly, to escape the danger that threatened him. I did not fail, however, of being there; and, to my utter surprise, my master returned at his usual time, went to bed without showing the least uneasiness, and got up next day with the same tranquillity.

When we had done dressing, somebody knocked at the door; upon which, my master, looking through the grate, perceived the same alguazil who had been there the preceding day, and asked what he wanted. 'Open,' answered

the alguazil, 'here is Monsieur, the corregidor.'* At this formidable name, my blood froze in my veins; for I was cursedly afraid of these gentlemen, since I passed through their hands; and wished that moment to be a hundred leagues from Madrid; but my patron, less afraid than I, opened the door, and received the judge with great respect. 'You see,' said the corregidor to him, 'I do not come to your lodgings with many attendants; being desirous of doing every thing with as little noise as possible; and I believe that you deserve this respect, notwithstanding the ugly reports that are spread of you. Tell me, therefore, your name, and business at Madrid?'—'Signior,' replied my master, 'I was born at New Castile, and my name is Don Bernard de Castel Blazo: with regard to my business, I divert myself in walking, frequenting shows, and enjoying the agreeable conversation of a few select friends.'—'Doubtless,' said the judge, 'you have a great income.'—'No, sir,' resumed my patron, interrupting him, 'I have neither rents, lands, nor house.'—'How do you live then?' replied the corregidor. 'On that which you shall see,' said Don Bernard: at the same time, he lifted up a hanging, opened a door, which I had not before observed, then another behind that, and carried the judge into a closet, where he showed him a great trunk filled with pieces of gold.

Then he went on: 'Signior, you know that the Spaniards are enemies to labour; nevertheless, how averse soever they may be to trouble,

* In every city of Spain, the corregidor is the chief civil magistrate, and is always appointed by the king.

I may safely say, that I excel them all in that particular; having a fund of laziness that renders me incapable of any manner of employment. If I had a mind to dignify my vices, I would call this laziness a philosophical indolence, the work of a mind weaned from every thing that is most ardently pursued in life: but I will frankly own, that I am constitutionally idle; and so idle, that if I was under a necessity of working for my livelihood, I believe I should let myself die of hunger. With a view, therefore, to lead a life agreeable to my humour, to free myself from the trouble of managing my estate, and above all things to save myself the plague of a steward, I have converted my whole patrimony, consisting of several considerable inheritances, into ready money. In this trunk are fifty thousand ducats; more than I shall ever have occasion for, was I to live another age; for I dont spend a thousand a year, and am already turned of fifty. I am not at all afraid of what is to happen; for, thank Heaven, I am not at all addicted to any one of the three things which commonly bring men to ruin. I am not a slave to my stomach; I play only for amusement; and am quite cured of women. So that I am under no apprehension of being ranked, in my old age, among those voluptuous dotards, who purchase the favours of courtezans at an extravagant price.'

'What a happy man you are!' said the corregidor: 'you are very unjustly suspected of being a spy; that office being very unfit for a person of your character. Proceed, Don Bernard,' added he; 'continue the life you now lead; and, far from disturbing your happiness, I declare myself the guardian of it. I beg the favour of

your friendship, and offer you mine in return.'—'Ah, Signior!' cried my master, penetrated with these obliging expressions, 'I accept the precious offer you make, with equal joy and respect; for, in vouchsafing me your friendship, you increase my wealth, and crown my felicity.' After this conversation, which the alguazil and I overheard at the closet-door, the corregidor took his leave of Don Bernard, who could not enough express his gratitude; while I, to second my master, and assist him in doing the honours of the house, overwhelmed the alguazil with civilities, making a thousand profound bows, though, in the bottom of my soul, I harboured that disdain and aversion which every man of honour has for one of his occupation.

CHAPTER II.

The astonishment of Gil Blas, when he met Captain Rolando at Madrid, and the curious things which that robber recounted to him.

Don Bernard de Castel Blazo, after having waited upon the corregidor to the street, returned with all expedition to lock his strong box, and all the doors that secured it. Then we went out both very well satisfied; he, for having acquired a powerful friend, and I, for being now secured in my six rials a day. The desire I had to recount this adventure to Melendez, made me take the road to his house, which, when I had almost reached, I perceived

Captain Rolando. I was confounded at finding him in this place, and could not help shivering at sight of him! He knew me at once, accosted me very gravely, and preserving still his air of superiority, ordered me to follow him. I obeyed with fear and trembling, saying to myself, 'Alas! he will, doubtless, make me pay what I owe him. Whither will he lead me! perhaps to some subterranean abode in this city. A plague upon it! if I thought so, I would let him see, in a hurry, that I have not got the gout in my toes.' As I walked behind him, I resolved to take particular notice of the place where he should stop, from which I proposed to scamper off as fast as my legs could carry me, should it seem in the least suspicious.

But Rolando soon banished my fear, by going into a noted tavern; whither I followed him, and where he called for the best wine, and bespoke dinner. In the mean time, we went into a room by ourselves, where the captain spoke in this manner: 'Thou must be surprised, Gil Blas, to meet thy old commander in this place; and wilt be more so still, when thou shalt hear what I am going to relate. That day on which I left thee in our subterranean retreat, and set out for Mansilla with my whole company, in order to dispose of the mules and horses we had taken the preceding day, it was our fortune to meet the son of the corregidor of Leon in his coach, accompanied by four men on horseback well armed. We made two of them bite the dust, and the others betake themselves to flight; while the coachman, afraid of his master's life, cried, in a suppliant voice, "O, dear gentlemen! in the name of God, do not kill the only son of th-

corregidor of Leon." My people did not at all relent at these words, which, on the contrary, inspired them with fury. "Gentlemen," said one among us, "let not the son of our mortal enemy escape: how many people of our profession hath his father put to death! let us avenge them now, and sacrifice this victim to their manes." The rest of my men approved of this proposal; and even my lieutenant prepared to act the high-priest in this ceremony, when I held his hands, saying, "Stop at your peril! why should we shed blood unnecessarily? let us be satisfied with the purse of this young man, whom, since he makes no resistance, it would be the utmost barbarity to kill: besides, he is not accountable for the actions of his father, who does no more than his duty in condemning us to death; just as we do ours in rifling travellers on the highway."

'My intercession was far from being unserviceable to the corregidor's son, from whom we took nothing but his money; and having carried off the horses of the two men we had slain, we sold them, together with our own, at Mansilla; then returning to our cavern, which we reached next day before it was light, we were not a little astonished to find the trap-door lifted up; and our surprise redoubled, when we saw Leonarda fettered in the kitchen. Being briefly informed by her of what had happened, we wondered how thou couldest outwit us, never having thought thee capable of playing such a clever trick, and we forgave thee on account of the invention. Having untied our cook-maid, and given orders to dress victuals for us, we went to look after our horses in the stable where the old negro,

who had received no sustenance for four and twenty hours, was at the last gasp. We would have given him all the assistance in our power; but he had lost his senses, and was otherwise so low, that notwithstanding our good-will, we left the poor devil in the clutches of death. This did not deprive us of our appetite, which, having satisfied with a sumptuous meal, we retired to our several chambers, and slept the rest of the day: when we got up, Leonarda let us know that Domingo was no more; upon which we carried him to the cellar, where thou mayest remember thy bed was, and there performed his funeral obsequies, as if he had enjoyed the honour of being our companion.

'Five or six days after, it happened, that intending to make an excursion, we one morning, on the skirts of the wood, fell in with three troops, belonging to the Holy Brotherhood, who seemed waiting in order to attack us. As we perceived only one of the three at first, we despised it, though more numerous than our company, and attacked it accordingly; but while we were engaged with this, the other two, who had found means to keep themselves hitherto concealed, rushed upon us so suddenly, that our valour was of little or no service, and we were under a necessity of yielding to the numbers of the foe. Our lieutenant and two of our men fell on the field, while the two that remained, and I, were so hemmed in and overpowered, that we were taken prisoners; and while two of their troops conducted us to Leon, the third went and destroyed our retreat, which had been discovered as follows: a peasant of Luceno crossing the forest in his re-

turn home, perceived, by accident, the trap-door of our cavern lifted up, that very day on which thou madest thy escape with the lady; and suspecting that it was the place of our abode, had not courage to go in, but contented himself with taking a good observation of the place, which the better to mark, he cut off, with his knife, thin slices of bark from the trees at small distances as he went along, until he had got quite out of the wood; then repairing to Leon, imparted his discovery to the corregidor, who receiving it with so much the more joy, as his son had been robbed by our company, assembled three troops in order to apprehend us, and the peasant was their guide.

'My arrival furnished a show for all the inhabitants of Leon: had I been a Portuguese general made prisoner of war, the people could not have been more eager to see me. "Behold," said they, "behold the famous captain who was the terror of this country, and who, with his two comrades, deserves to have the flesh torn from his bones with red-hot pincers." Being carried before the corregidor, he began to insult me, saying, "Well, miserable wretch! Heaven, wearied with the disorders of thy life, at last resigns thee to my justice!"—"Sir," replied I, "if my crimes are manifold, at least, I cannot reproach myself with the death of your only son, whose life I preserved, for which you owe me some acknowledgment."—"Ah, miscreant!" cried he "people of thy character are not entitled to the privileges of honour; and even if I had a mind to save thy life, the duty of my office would not allow me!" Having spoke to me in this manner, he ordered us to be imprisoned in a dun-

geon, where he did not let my companions linger long; for they went out in three days, to act their last tragical scene in the market-place. As for me, I remained three whole weeks in gaol, imagining that my punishment was deferred, in order to make it more terrible; and was in expectation of a death altogether new, when the corregidor, ordering me to be brought into his presence, said, "Listen to thy sentence. Thou art free. Had it not been for thee, my only son would have been murdered on the highway. As a father, I was willing to acknowledge this piece of service; but not having it in my power to acquit thee as a judge, I have wrote to court in thy behalf, solicited thy pardon, and obtained it. Thou mayest go, then, whither thou shalt please. But," added he, "take my advice; reflect seriously on thy ill-spent life, and from henceforth quit the profession of robbery."

'I was deeply affected with these words, and took the road to Madrid, resolved to turn over a new leaf, and live honestly in that city. I found my parents were dead, and their effects in the hands of an old relation, who gave me such a faithful account of them as guardians commonly do; all that I have been able to touch, being no more than three thousand ducats, which, in all probability, is not above one fourth of what is my due. But what course could I take? I should gain nothing by going to law: therefore, to avoid idleness, I have purchased the place of an alguazil. My brethren, out of decency, would have opposed my admission, had they been acquainted with my story, which luckily they were ignorant of, or pretended to be so, which is the same

thing; for in that honourable corps it is the business of every individual to conceal his own exploits: thank heaven! not one of us can justly reproach his fellow; so that it may be said of the fraternity—"The devil may take the best." Nevertheless, my friend,' added Rolando, 'I will now disclose the bottom of my soul: the profession which I have embraced, is not at all to my liking; it requires a behaviour too delicate and mysterious for me; and whatever tricks we practice, must be very crafty and secret. O how I regret my old profession! I grant, there is more safety in this new employment; but there was more pleasure in the other; and liberty is my delight. In all likelihood I shall get rid of my office, and set out one morning for the mountains at the source of the river Tagus, where I know there is a retreat inhabited by a numerous company, chiefly of Catalonians; (that is making their eulogium in one word:) if thou wilt accompany me, we will go and increase the number of these great men; I shall be second captain in their company; and will, for thy better reception, assure them, that I have seen thee ten times engaged by my side; I will extol thy valour to the skies, and say more in thy praise than a general says of an officer whom he wants to promote. I will take care not to mention a word of the trick thou hast played, because it would make them suspicious of thee: the adventure shall therefore be concealed. Well,' added he, 'art thou ready to follow my fortune? I wait for thy reply.'

'So many men, so many minds,' said I to Rolando; 'you are born for hardy deeds, and I for a quiet and easy life.'—'Oh! I understand you,'

cried he, interrupting me; 'the lady whom love persuaded you to rescue, still keeps possession of your heart; and doubtless you lead a happy life with her at Madrid. Confess, Mr. Gil Blas, that you have taken lodgings for her, and spend together the pistoles which you carried of from the subterranean retreat.' I told him that he was mistaken, and that, in order to undeceive him, I would, while we should be at dinner, relate the story of the lady: this I did accordingly, and informed him of all that had happened to me since I quitted the company. Toward the end of our repast, he resumed the subject of the Catalonians, acknowledged that he was determined to join them, and made a new attempt to engage me in the same resolution; but finding that I was not to be persuaded, he darted a fierce look at me, saying, in a very serious tone,—'Since thou hast such a grovelling soul, as to prefer thy servile condition to the honour of associating with men of courage, I abandon thee to the baseness of thy inclinations; but listen to the words I am about to pronounce, and let them remain engraven on thy memory: forget that thou hast met me to-day, and never talk of me from henceforth; for if ever I shall hear that thou so much as namest me in conversation—thou knowest me—I will say no more.' Having thus expressed himself, he called to pay, discharged the bill, and we got up in order to part.

CHAPTER III.

He is dismissed by Don Bernard de Castel Blazo, and enters into the service of a Beau.

As we went out of the tavern, and were taking leave of one another, my master happening to pass, saw me; and, I perceived, looked hard at the captain, which made me believe that he was surprised to find me acquainted with such a figure. Certain it is, that the appearance of Rolando could not prepossess people in his favour: for he was a very tall fellow, with a long visage and hook-nose; and, though not ugly, had very much the air of a rank sharper.

I was not deceived in my conjectures; for, in the evening, I found Don Bernard still harping on the captain's figure, and extremely well disposed to believe all the fine things I could have said of him, had not my mouth been shut. 'Gil Blas,' said he, 'who is that tall spunger, in whose company I saw thee to-day?' I replied, 'He is an alguazil;' and thought he would rest satisfied with that answer: but he asked a great many other questions; and as I appeared embarrassed, because I remembered the threat of Rolando, he broke off the conversation abruptly, and went to bed. Next morning, when I had done my duty as usual, instead of six rials, he gave me as many ducats, saying,—'Hold, my friend; here is what I give thee for having served me hitherto; go,

and seek for another place, for I cannot put up with a servant who has such honourable acquaintances.' It came in my head to pretend, in my own justification, that my acquaintance with the alguazil was occasioned by my having prescribed for him, whilst I practised physic at Valladolid. 'Very well,' replied my master, 'that's an ingenious evasion; but thou shouldest have thought of it last night, and not have been so much disconcerted.'—'Sir,' added I, 'I thought it would be imprudent for me to tell it; and that was the cause of my confusion.'—'O! surely,' replied he, clapping my shoulder very gently, 'you have been very prudent; I did not think thou hadst been so cunning. Go, child, I have no further occasion for thee.'

I went instantly to inform Melendez of this piece of bad news, who told me, for my consolation, that he intended to introduce me into a better family; and accordingly, a few days after, 'Gil Blas, my friend,' said he, 'you don't know what good knews I have to tell you: you are going to enjoy the most agreeable post you could desire; for I will settle you with Don Matthias de Silva, a man of the first quality, and one of those young lords who go under the denomination of beaus: he does me the honour to buy cloth of me; on trust, indeed; but there is nothing to be lost by people of his rank; for they commonly marry rich heiresses, who pay their debts; and even if that should not happen, a tradesman, who understands his business, sells always so dear, that he can afford to lose three-fourths of his bargain. The steward of Don Matthias is my particular friend: let us go to him now; he will himself present you to his master; and you may

depend upon it he will, for my sake, treat you with uncommon regard.'

In our way to the house of Don Matthias, the merchant said, 'It will not be amiss, I believe, to give you some information of the character of this steward, whose name is Gregorio Rodriguez. Between you and me, he is a man of no family, who, finding himself born for business, followed the bent of his genius, and enriched himself with the pillage of two families which he served in quality of steward. I assure you, he has a great deal of vanity, and loves to see the rest of the servants cringe to him. They must address themselves first to him, when they have the least favour to ask of their master; for should it happen, that they obtain it without his interest, he has always expedients in readiness by which it will either be revoked, or rendered ineffectual. Remember this, Gil Blas, in the regulation of your conduct: pay your court to Signior Rodriguez, preferable to your master himself, and do all that lies in your power to please him; his friendship will bestead you much; he will pay your wages punctually; and if you are dexterous enough to acquire his confidence, he may give you some pretty bone to pick, out of the number he has in his possession. Don Matthias is a young lord, who minds nothing but his pleasure, and would not for the world inform himself of the state of his own affairs. What a glorious family is that for a steward!'

Arriving at the house, we desired to speak with Signior Rodriguez, who, we were told, was in his own apartment: there we found him with a kind of farmer, who had a blue canvas bag of money in his hand. The steward, who

looked more pale and yellow than a girl oppressed with her virginity, came toward Melendez with open arms: he, on the other hand, met him in the same manner, and they embraced one another with demonstrations of friendship, in which there was, at least, as much art as nature. Then my affair coming upon the carpet, Rodriguez examined me from head to foot, and told me, in a very polite manner, that I was just such a one as Don Matthias wanted, and that he would with pleasure present me to that lord. Upon which, Melendez letting him know how much he was interested in my behalf, and begging that he would favour me with his protection, committed me to his care; and, after abundance of compliments, withdrew. He was no sooner gone, than Rodriguez said to me, 'I will conduct you to my master as soon as I can despatch this honest countryman.' Then going to the peasant, and taking hold of the bag, 'Talego,' said he, 'let us see if there be just five hundred pistoles here.' Having counted the money, and found it right, he gave the farmer a discharge for the sum, and sent him about his business; and putting the pistoles into the bag again, addressed himself to me, saying, 'This is the right time for us to go to the levee of my master, who commonly rises about noon. It is near the hour, and I suppose he is up.'

This was the case: we found Don Matthias in his morning-gown, lolling in an easy chair, over an arm of which he had tilted one of his legs, and poised himself by leaning with his body the other way, and rasped tobacco, while he talked to a footman; who, for the present, did the duty of his valet de chambre. 'My lord,' said the

steward to him, 'here is a young man, whom I take the liberty to present as one fit to fill the place of the valet whom you dismissed two days ago. Melendez, your draper, recommends him, assuring me, that he is a lad of merit; and I hope your lordship will be very well satisfied with his behaviour.'—'Enough,' answered the young lord; 'since you introduce him to me, I receive him into my service with implicit faith, and make him my valet de chambre: so that affair is settled. But, Rodriguez,' added he, 'let us talk of something else: you are come very opportunely; for I was just going to send for you. I have bad news to tell you, my dear Rodriguez! you must know, I had ill-luck at play last night. Together with a hundred pistoles which I had about me, I have lost two hundred more on my parole; and you must know of what importance it is for people of quality to discharge that sort of debts: it is, indeed, the only kind which we are obliged, in point of honour, to pay, and we do not give ourselves much concern about the rest; you must, therefore, find two hundred pistoles immediately, and send them to the Countess of Pedrosa.'—'Sir,' said the steward, 'it is sooner said than done. Where shall I get that sum to please you? I have not been able to finger one farthing of your tenants, let me threaten as hard as I can; and yet I am obliged to maintain your family in an honourable way, though I sweat blood and water in procuring wherewithal to defray the expense. True, indeed, I have hitherto, thank Heaven! made shift; but I am now reduced to such extremity, that I know not what saint in heaven to invoke.'—'All these harangues

are useless,' cried Don Matthias, interrupting him; 'and you worry me with your reflections. Don't you imagine, Rodriguez, that I will change my disposition, and divert myself with looking into my own affairs? An agreeable amusement, truly, for a man of pleasure like me!'—'Have a little patience,' replied the steward; 'at the rate you go on, I foresee that you will be rid of that care in a very short time.'—'You fatigue me,' said the young lord in a passion; 'you murder me! Give me leave to ruin myself imperceptibly; I tell you, I want two hundred pistoles, and I must have them.'—'I'll go, then,' said Rodriguez, 'and have recourse to the little old man, who has already lent you money at high interest.' 'You may, if you please, have recourse to the devil,' answered Don Matthias: 'provided I have two hundred pistoles, I shall give myself no further trouble about the matter.'

Just as he had pronounced these words in a hasty and discontented manner, the steward went away, and a young man of quality, called Don Antonio Centelles, came in. 'What is the matter?' said this last to my master; 'thou art cloudy, my friend: I perceive indignation in thy countenance. What can have put you into this bad humour? I'll lay a wager it is the man whom I met going out.'—'Yes,' replied Don Matthias, 'it was my steward: every time he comes to speak with me, I suffer for one quarter of an hour, by his talking about my affairs, and saying that I have quite exhausted my finances. Impertinent beast! he cannot say that he loses by me, I'm sure.'—'Why, child,' said Don Antonio, 'I am in the same condition; having a factor not a whit more reasonable than thy steward. When

the rogue, in obedience to my repeated orders, brings money for me, one would think he gave it out of his own pocket. He overwhelms me with reflections. "Sir," says he, "you are undone; your rents are seized." Upon which, I am obliged to cut him short, in order to put an end to his ridiculous discourse.'—'The misfortune is,' said Don Matthias, 'we cannot live without these people, who are necessary evils.'—'They are so,' replied Centelles; 'but, hark'e,' added he, laughing with all his might, 'there is a comical thought come into my head: a most incomparable conception! by which we may convert those scenes which we have with them into mirth, and divert ourselves with that which now gives us so much uneasiness. Let me demand of thy steward all the money thou shalt have occasion for, while thou dost the same by my manager; then they may moralize as they please, we can hear them with great composure; because thy steward will show me thy accounts, and my factor will entertain thee with mine: I shall hear of nothing but thy profusion, and thou wilt see nothing but mine. This will be admirable sport!'

A thousand bright strokes succeeded this sally, and mightily diverted the young lords, who conversed together with a great deal of vivacity; until their discourse was interrupted by Gregorio Rodriguez, who returned with a little old man almost quite bald. Don Antonio would have gone away, saying, 'Adieu, Don Matthias, I shall see you by and by: at present you have, doubtless, some serious affair to discuss with these gentlemen.' 'O, not at all,' replied my master; 'stay, it is no secret. That discreet old person,

whom you see, is an honest man, who lends me money at the rate of twenty per cent.' 'How! twenty per cent!' cried Centelles, with an air of astonishment; 'egad, I congratulate thee upon being in such good hands! I am not so kindly dealt with, and may say that I purchase silver at the price of gold: I commonly borrow at the rate of forty in the hundred.' 'Heavens! what extortion!' exclaimed the usurer; 'do these knaves ever think of another world? I am not at all surprised at the hue and cry raised against people who lend upon interest. It is the exorbitant profit which some exact, that ruins our honour and reputation: if all my brethren were like me, we should not be so much reviled; for my sole view in lending, is to befriend my fellow-creatures. Ah! if times were as they have been, I would offer you my purse without interest; and truly, in spite of the present scarcity, I can scarce prevail upon myself to take twenty per cent. But, for my part, I believe money has retired again within the bowels of the earth: there is no such thing to be had; for which reason I am obliged to retrench my benevolence.

'How much do you want?' added he, addressing himself to my master. 'I must have two hundred pistoles,' replied Don Matthias. 'Here are four hundred in a bag,' said the usurer; you shall have one half.' So saying, he pulled from under his cloak a blue bag, which seemed to be the very same which the peasant Talego had left, with the five hundred pistoles, in the hands of Rodriguez. I soon knew what to think of the matter; and found that Melendez had not praised the steward's understanding without a cause. The old man having

emptied the bag on the table, began to count the money: my master was inflamed with desire of possession at the sight, and, struck with the totality of the sum, said to the usurer, 'Signior Discomulgado, I have made a very wise reflection, truly! What a fool am I to borrow no more than what is absolutely necessary to disengage my parole, without considering that I have not a penny in my purse! I shall be obliged to have recourse to you to-morrow; therefore, to spare you the trouble of coming back, I think it will not be amiss to pocket the whole four hundred.'—'My lord,' said the usurer, 'a part of this money was designed for a good licentiate, who has some fat benefices, which he charitably employs in persuading young girls to retire from the world, and in furnishing their retreats. But since you have occasion for the whole sum, it is at your service: all that I desire is sufficient security.'—'Oh! as for security,' said Rodriguez, interrupting him, and taking a paper out of his pocket, 'you shall be satisfied; here is an order to be signed by Don Matthias, for five hundred pistoles, upon one of his tenants, called Talego, a rich farmer of Mondejan.'—'Very well,' replied the usurer, 'I never make many words.' Upon which the steward presented a pen to his master; who, without reading the order, set his name to the bottom, whistling all the while.

This affair being ended, the old man took his leave of my patron, who ran and embraced him, saying, 'Till our next meeting, Signior Usurer, I am wholly yours: I don't know why people of your profession are branded with the name

of rogues; for my own part, I think you are very necessary and serviceable to society; you are the consolation of a thousand heirs, and the resource of all those lords whose expense exceeds their income.'—'Thou art in the right,' cried Centelles; 'usurers are very honest people, whom we can never honour enough. I will, in my turn, embrace this gentleman, on account of his twenty per cent.' With these words, he approached, and hugged the old man; and these two beaus, for their diversion, began to push him backward and forward to one another, like a ball between two tennis-players. After he had been tossed to and fro a good while, they let him go with the steward, who was more deserving than he of their embraces, and of something else also.

Rodriguez and his understrapper being gone, Don Matthias sent the half of his pistoles to the Countess of Pedrosa, by the footman who was present, and secured the rest in a long embroidered silk purse, which he commonly wore in his pocket. Very well satisfied with seeing himself in cash, he said to Don Antonio, with a gay air, 'What shall we do to-day? Let us consult about it.'—'You speak like a sensible man,' repLed Centelles: 'with all my heart, let us deliberate.' While they were considering how to spend the day, two other lords arrived: these were Don Alexo Segiar, and Don Fernando de Gamboa, both of them about the age of my master, that is, between eight-and-twenty and thirty. These four cavaliers, at meeting, hugged one another so heartily, that one would have thought they had not met for ten years before; then Don Fernando, who was a jovial companion, addressing

himself to Don Matthias and Don Antonio, said, 'Gentlemen, where do you intend to dine to-day? If you are not engaged, I'll conduct you to a tavern, where you shall drink nectar. I supped there last night, and left it only this morning, between five and six o'clock.'—'Would to heaven,' cried my master, 'that I had done the same! in which case, I should not have lost my money.'

'As for me,' said Centelles, 'I treated myself last night with a new diversion; for I love variety in my pleasures, which alone makes life agreeable. A friend of mine carried me to the house of a farmer of the revenue, a gentleman who does his own business, together with that of the state. There I saw magnificence and taste, the entertainment being elegant enough. But I was mightily diverted with the ridiculous behaviour of the tax-gatherer himself, who, though the most plebeian of his class, assumed the man of quality: and his wife, though horribly ugly, affected the airs of a beauty; and said a thousand silly things, seasoned with the Biscayan accent, which rendered them still more remarkably foolish. Besides, there were at table four or five children, with their tutor; so that you may easily conceive how I was diverted with this family supper.'

'And I, gentlemen,' said Don Alexo Segiar, 'supped at the house of Arsenia the actress. We were six in all; Arsenia, Florimonda, with a coquette of her acquaintance, the Marquis of Zeneta, Don Juan of Moncada, and your humble servant. We spent the night in drinking and speaking bawdry Heavens! what pleasure! It is true, indeed, Arsenia and Florimonda have

not much genius, but their wantonness supplies the place of wit. They are merry, brisk, romping creatures; and I love them a thousand times better than your precise women of sense.'

CHAPTER IV.

How Gil Blas became acquainted with the valets of the beaus. The admirable secret they imparted to him, of acquiring the reputation of a man of wit, at a small expense; and the singular oath which they obliged him to take.

In this manner did these lords continue the conversation, until Don Matthias, whom, in the mean time, I helped to dress, was ready to go abroad. Then he bade me follow him; and all the beaus together set out for the tavern to which Don Fernando de Gamboa had proposed to conduct them. As I walked in the rear, in company with three other valets, (for each of the cavaliers had one) I observed, not without wonder, that these three domestics copied the air and manner of their respective masters. Having saluted them as their new comrade, they returned the civility; and one among them, after having observed me some minutes, said, 'Brother, I perceive that you have never as yet served a young lord.'—'No, indeed,' answered I; 'it is not long since I came to Madrid.'—'So, I suppose,' replied he, 'you smell strong of the country; you seem timorous and awkward, and there is a stiffness in your behaviour: but no matter; we will soon polish

you, take my word.'—'I am afraid you flatter me,' said I to him. 'Not at all,' he replied; 'if you were the greatest blockhead in the universe, we shall be able to make you pass, you may depend upon it.'

This was enough to make me understand that my confederates were brave lads, and that I could not be in better hands, in order to become a pretty fellow. When we arrived at the tavern, we found an entertainment ready, which Signior Don Fernando had the precaution to bespeak in the morning; our masters sat down to table, and we stood ready to serve them: then they began to talk with such gayety, that I was delighted to hear them. I was very much diverted with their different characters, thoughts, and expressions; their fire, their sallies of imagination, made me believe them a new species of men! When the dessert was upon the table, we brought in a great number of bottles of the best Spanish wine, and left them, to go and dine by ourselves in a little hall, where the cloth was laid on purpose.

I soon perceived that the knights, my companions, had more merit than I at first imagined: they not only assumed the manners of their masters, but even affected their very language; and these rascals succeeded so well, that (the quality air excepted) there was no difference; I admired their free and easy deportment; was charmed with their wit, and despaired of ever being so agreeable. The valet of Don Fernando (because his master treated ours) performed the honours of the banquet; and, that nothing might be wanting, called the landlord, saying, 'Master Andrew Mantuano, give us ten bottles of your very best

wine, and, according to custom, add them to my master's bill.'—'With all my heart,' replied the landlord; 'but, Mr. Gaspard, you know that Signior Don Fernando owes me a good many entertainments already; and if by your means I could touch a little money'—'Oh!' said the valet, interrupting him, 'give yourself no trouble about what he owes you; I'll answer for it, my master's debts are as good as gold: it is true, indeed, some unmannerly creditors have seized our rents; but we shall obtain a replevy very soon, and then we shall discharge your bill without so much as examining the articles.' Mantuano brought the wine, notwithstanding the rents being seized; and we drank it in expectation of a replevy. It was a good jest to see us, every moment, toasting one another, under the surnames of our masters: Don Antonio's valet giving the name of Gamboa to Don Fernando's servant, and Don Fernando's footman honouring Don Antonio's valet with that of Centelles; they called me Silva; and by degrees we got as drunk under those borrowed names as our masters, to whom they properly belonged.

Though I did not shine so much as my companions, they did not fail to express their approbation of me. 'Silva,' said one of the archest among them, 'we shall make something of thee, my friend: I perceive thou hast a fund of genius, but dost not know how to use it to advantage. The fear of speaking nonsense hinders thee from talking at a venture; and yet, by this alone, a thousand people now-a-days acquire the reputation of wits. If thou hast a mind to shine, give the rein to thy vivacity, and indifferently risk every thing that comes uppermost. Thy blun-

ders will pass for a noble boldness; and if, after having uttered a thousand impertinences, one witticism escapes thee, the silly things will be forgot, the lucky thought will be remembered, and the world will conceive a high opinion of thy merit. This is what our masters practise with such success; and what every man must do, who aspires to the reputation of a distinguished wit.'

Besides that I was but too fond of passing for a fine genius, the secret which he had disclosed to me seemed so easy, that I was resolved not to neglect it. I put it instantly to the proof, and the wine I had drank contributed to its success; that is, I spoke at random, and had the good fortune to throw out, among a great deal of nonsense, some flashes of wit, by which I acquired great applause. This *coup d'essai* filled me with confidence: I collected all my vivacity to produce some bright sally, and chance befriended me in the attempt.

'Well,' said he who spoke to me in the street, 'don't you begin to get rid of your rust.' Thou hast not been two hours in our company, and art already quite another man. Thou wilt improve visibly every day. See what it is to serve people of quality: it elevates the mind; while the being valet to citizens has a quite contrary effect.' 'Doubtless,' answered I; 'and therefore I will henceforth consecrate my service to the nobility.' 'That's nobly said!' cried Don Fernando's valet, half-seas over; 'it does not belong to your citizens to possess such superior geniuses as we are. 'Come, therefore, gentlemen,' added he, 'let us take an oath never to serve such rapscallions, and swear to it by the river Styx.'

We laughed heartily at Gaspard's conceit, which we approved of very much, and took the burlesque oath with our glasses in our hands.

Thus we continued at table until our masters were pleased to retire, which was about midnight; a circumstance which my companions looked upon as an excess of sobriety. It is true, indeed, these young lords left the tavern in such good time, only with a view to visit a famous coquette, who lived in the court end of the town, and kept open house for young men of pleasure by night as well as by day. She was between thirty and forty years old, still extremely handsome, agreeable, and so consummate in the art of pleasing, that (it was said) she sold the remains of her beauty at a higher price than that which she had received for its first fruits. There were always in her house two or three other courtezans of the first rank, who contributed not a little to the great concourse of lords who frequented it. They went to play in the afternoon, then supped, and spent the night in drinking and making merry. Here our masters staid till morning, and we also, without feeling the time lie heavy on our hands; for while they diverted themselves with the mistresses, we amused ourselves with the maids; and at last departed all together at break of day, every one going to bed at his own home.

My master, getting up as usual about noon, dressed himself, and went out. I followed him to the house of Don Antonio Centelles, where we found one Don Alvaro de Acunha, an old gentleman, and professed rake. All the young sparks who had an ambition to become fine gentlemen, put themselves under his tuition; by

which they were formed for pleasure, taught to make a figure in the world, and to spend their fortunes with a good grace; he himself being under no apprehension of squandering away his own, which was gone long ago. These three cavaliers having saluted one another, Centelles said to my master, 'Faith, Don Matthias, thou couldst not come at a better time; Don Alvaro is going to carry me to the house of a citizen who has invited the Marquis of Zenta and Don Juan de Moncado to dinner, and thou shalt be of the party.' 'What is the name of this citizen?' said Don Matthias. 'He is called Gregorio de Noriega,' replied Don Alvaro; 'and I will, in two words, give you a character of the man. His father, who is a rich jeweller, having gone abroad to negociate his affairs, left him the enjoyment of a large income; but Gregorio is a fool, who has a disposition prone to spend his estate; in doing which, he affects the beau, and would fain pass for a man of spirit, in despite of nature. As he begged me to take him under my direction, I govern him at present; and I can assure you, gentlemen, he is in a fair way; his finances being already pretty well sunk.' 'I don't at all doubt it,' cried Centelles: 'I see him already at the workhouse. Come, Don Matthias, let us make an acquaintance with him, that we may have some share in his ruin.' 'With all my heart,' replied my master; 'I love dearly to see the fortune of these little upstart gentlemen overturned, because they vainly pretend to rival us in splendour. Nothing, for example, ever gave me so much diversion as the misfortune of that publican's son, who was, by his inclination for play, and his vanity in aping the great, obliged to sell all, to his very

house.' 'Oh! as for him,' said Don Antonio, 'he deserves no compassion; for he is as great a coxcomb in his adversity as he was in high life.'

Centelles and my master repairing with Don Alvaro to the house of Gregorio de Noriega, Mogicon and I went thither also; both of us ravished to find a feast going forward, and to have an opportunity of contributing, on our parts, to the ruin of a citizen. As we went in, we perceived several people busy in dressing the dinner; and the ragouts they were preparing sent forth a savoury steam, that very much prepossessed the smell in favour of the taste. The Marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan of Moncado arrived; and the entertainer seemed to be a great booby, who attempted in vain to assume the carriage of a beau, being a very bad copy of those excellent originals, or rather a downright simpleton, who affected an air of understanding. Imagine to yourself a man of this character in the midst of five wags, whose sole aim was to exercise their raillery upon him, and engage him in insupportable expense. 'Gentlemen,' said Don Alvaro, after the first compliments, 'I present to you Signior Gregorio de Noriega, as a complete cavalier. Besides a thousand other excellent qualifications, he possesses an understanding so exquisitely cultivated, that you cannot take him amiss. He is equally strong on all subjects, from the most close and subtle logic down to the art of spelling.'—'Oh, now you flatter me,' said the citizen, interrupting him with a very foolish laugh: 'Signior Alvaro, I may with more justice return the compliment; for you are, as one may say, a very draw-well of erudition.'—'I had no design,' replied Don Al-

varo, 'to fish for such a genteel repartee; but, upon my word, gentlemen, Signior Gregorio cannot fail of acquiring great reputation in the world.' 'For my own part,' said Don Antonio, 'what I am most charmed with, and what I greatly prefer to his knowledge in orthography, is the judicious choice he makes of his company: instead of confining himself to the conversation of citizens, he cultivates acquaintance with none but young lords, without giving himself any trouble about the expense attending it. There is in this conduct an elevation of sentiment; and it may be called spending one's money with taste and discernment.'

These ironical phrases were followed by a thousand more of the same sort, and poor Gregorio was spared by none of them; each of the beaus, in his turn, breaking his jest, the meaning of which the fool did not perceive: on the contrary, he took every thing in a literal sense, and appeared very happy in his guests; nay, he seemed even pleased with being turned into ridicule; and, in short, served them as a butt during the whole time of dinner. They staid with him the remaining part of the day, and all night long, whilst we drank at discretion as well as our masters; and by the time they took leave of the citizen, we were all in an excellent trim.

CHAPTER V.

Gil Blas sets up for a man of gallantry, and becomes acquainted with a fine lady.

After having refreshed myself with some hours of sleep, I got up in good humour; and remembering the advice I had received from Melendez, went (my master not being yet awake) and presented my respects to the steward, whose vanity seemed not a little flattered with this instance of my regard. He received me very graciously; and asked if I was not familiarized to the way of living practised among young noblemen. I replied, that though it was quite new to me as yet, I did not despair of being reconciled to it in time.

And truly this happened very soon; for my humour and disposition suffered a thorough change. From being sedate and pensive, I became a brisk, blundering coxcomb; and the valet of Don Antonio complimented me on my metamorphosis, saying, that there was nothing now wanting to make me illustrious but an intrigue; which he affirmed was absolutely necessary toward finishing the character of a pretty fellow; all our comrades being beloved by some fine lady; and he alone being in possession of the good graces of no less than two women of quality. I believed the rogue told a lie, and said to him, 'Monsieur Mogicon, to be sure, you are a handsome young fellow, and have a great deal of wit and merit; but I cannot conceive how ladies of

quality (especially as you don't live among such) can allow themselves to be charmed by a man of your condition.'—'Why, truly,' said he, 'they don't know who I am. I make all my conquests in the dress, and even in the name of my master. I'll tell you how: I dress myself like a young nobleman; I assume his behaviour, and go out to take the air; I ogle all the women I see, until I meet with one who returns the leer; her I follow, and find means to speak with. I call myself Don Antonio de Centelles, and demand an assignation; upon which the lady stands upon ceremony: I press her to comply; she yields, *et cætera*. By this conduct, my child,' added he, 'I have succeeded in my intrigues; and I advise thee to follow my example.'

I was too ambitious of making a figure, not to listen to this advice, and besides felt no aversion to a love intrigue: I therefore resolved to disguise myself like a young nobleman, and go in quest of amorous adventures; but as I durst not dress myself in our house, for fear of being observed, I took a rich suit of clothes from my master's wardrobe, and making it up into a bundle, carried it to the house of a little barber, a friend of mine, where I thought I could dress and undress with more convenience. There I adorned myself to the best of my power, the barber lending me a helping hand, in order to set me off; and when we imagined it was impossible to add any thing to my appearance, I walked toward St. Jerome's Meadow, from whence I was persuaded I should not return without having found some intrigue to my liking: but before I was obliged to go so far from home, I started one of a very brilliant expectation.

As I was crossing a by-street, I saw a lady richly dressed, and perfectly genteel, come out of a small house, and get into a hackney-coach that stood before the door; upon which, stopping short to gaze, I bowed to her in such a manner, as to inform her that I was not at all disgusted at her appearance; and she, to let me see she deserved my notice still more than I imagined, lifted up her veil for a moment, and presented a most agreeable countenance to my view: meanwhile the coach drove off, and I remained in the street, not a little struck with this apparition. 'What a charming figure!' said I to myself. 'Bless me! this is just what I wanted to complete my character. If the two ladies who are in love with Mogicon are as handsome as this, I pronounce him a lucky knave. I should be charmed with my fate, had I such a mistress.'

While I made these reflections, I cast my eyes by accident toward the house from whence I had seen this lovely creature come out, and perceived, at a parlour window, an old gentlewoman who beckoned me to come in.

I flew into the house in an instant, and found, in a pretty handsome parlour, this venerable and discreet matron; who, taking me for a marquis at least, saluted me with great respect, saying, 'I don't at all doubt, Signior, that you have conceived a very bad opinion of a woman who, without being acquainted with you, beckons you into her house; but perhaps you will think more favourably of me, when you shall know that I don't treat every body in the same manner. But you, I suppose, are a court lord.' 'You are not mistaken, my soul,' said I, stretching out my right leg, and poising my body on my left hip;

'I am, without vanity, of one of the best families of Spain.' 'I thought so, by your appearance,' she replied; 'and I own, I love to oblige people of quality: that is my foible. I observed you through the window, looking very earnestly (as I suppose) at a lady who had just parted from me. Have you a passion for her? tell me sincerely.' 'Upon the faith of a courtier,' answered I, 'she has captivated me. I never saw any thing more tempting than that creature. Bring us together, my good mother, and depend upon my acknowledgment: such good offices rendered to us grandees seldom pass unrecompensed.'

'I have already told you,' replied the old gentlewoman, 'that I am wholly devoted to people of quality, and delight in being useful to them. I admit into my house, for instance, certain ladies, whom the exteriors of virtue hinder from receiving their gallants at home; therefore I accommodate them with my house, in order to reconcile the warmth of their complexions with the rules of decency.' 'Very well,' said I to her; 'and I suppose you have granted that favour to the lady in question?' 'No,' she replied; 'this lady is a young widow of quality, who wants a lover; but she is so nice in that particular, that I don't know if you yourself will please her, notwithstanding your extraordinary merit: I have already presented to her three stout cavaliers, whom she treated with disdain.' 'Ad-zooks, my dear!' cried I, with an air of assurance, 'thou hast no more to do, but to put me on the scent. I will give thee a good account of her, believe me. I long to have a tête-à-tête with a shy beauty, having never as yet met with one of that character.' 'Well,' said the old lady; 'if you come hither to-morrow,

about this time, your curiosity may be satisfied.' 'I will not fail,' answered I; 'and we shall see whether or not a young nobleman, such as I, may taste the pleasure of a conquest.'

I returned to the house of the little barber, without desiring any other adventures, but very impatient to see the issue of this. Next day, therefore, having been at great pains to set myself off, I repaired to the old gentlewoman's house, an hour before the appointment. 'Signior,' said she, 'I see you are punctual, and am glad of it; for you will find it well worth your trouble. I have seen your young widow, and have had some discourse with her about you. She has forbid me to speak; but I have conceived such a friendship for you, that I cannot hold my tongue. You have had the good fortune to make an impression on her heart, and will be happy very soon. Between you and me, the lady is a delicious morsel; her husband lived with her but a very short time; he fleeted away, as it were, like a shadow; so that she is as good as a maiden.' The good matron, doubtless, meant one of those sprightly maidens, who know how to enjoy life without the encumbrance of matrimony.

In a little time, the heroine of the assignation arrived in a stage-coach, as she had done the day before, adorned with all the pomp of dress. As soon as she appeared in the hall, I began by five or six a-la-mode bows, accompanied with their most fashionable contortions; after which, I approached her with a very familiar air, saying, 'My princess, behold a young nobleman who is enrapt with your beauty. Your image, since yesterday, has incessantly presented itself to my

imagination, and expelled a dutchess, who had begun to get footing in my heart.' 'The triumph,' answered she, taking off her veil, 'is too glorious for me, and yet I do not perfectly enjoy it; for you young noblemen are prone to change; and your hearts, they say, more difficult to keep than quicksilver.' 'But, my queen,' I replied, 'let us mind the present only, and let futurity shift for itself: you are handsome, and I amorous; and, if you approve of my passion, let us engage without any further reflection, and embark like sailors, who think only of the pleasures, without perceiving the perils of their voyage.'

So saying, I threw myself, in a transport, at the feet of my nymph; and, the better to imitate the beaus, pressed her, in a petulant manner, to make me happy. She seemed a little moved by my entreaties, but thought it was too soon to yield; therefore, pushing me gently from her, 'Hold,' said she; 'you are too forward, and have the air of a libertine; I am afraid you are no better than a downright rake.' 'O fie, madam!' cried I, 'sure you cannot hate what all ladies of fashion love: none but tradesmen's wives exclaim against libertinism.' You are certainly in the right,' she replied; 'and I cannot resist such a convincing reason. It is in vain, I find, to use grimace with noblemen like you, and the women must advance one half of the way. Know then your victory,' added she, with an appearance of confusion, as if her modesty suffered in the confession: 'you have inspired me with sentiments which I never felt before, and I want only to know who you are, that I may determine to choose you for my lover. I believe you are a young lord, and moreover a man of honour.

But of this I am not assured; and howsoever I may be prepossessed in your favour, I am resolved not to bestow my affection on a person unknown.'

It was then I remembered the expedient of Don Antonio's valet, on the same occasion; and, after his example, having a mind to pass for my master, 'Madam,' said I to my widow, 'I will not refuse to tell you my name, which I need not be ashamed to own; did you never hear of Don Matthias de Silva?' 'Yes,' she replied; 'I have even seen him at the house of a lady, an acquaintance of mine.' Although I was pretty well stocked with impudence, this answer disconcerted me a good deal; however, I recollected myself in an instant, and making an effort of genius to extricate myself; 'Well, then, my angel,' said I, 'you know a lord whom—I know also. Since you must have it, I am one of the same family; his grandfather married my grand uncle's sister-in-law: so that you see we are very nearly related. My name is Don Cæsar, and I am the only son of the illustrious Don Fernand de Ribera, who was slain fifteen years ago, in a battle that was fought on the frontiers of Portugal. I could describe the action, which was hellishly hot; but that would be losing the precious moments which love prompts us to employ in a more agreeable manner.'

After this discourse, I became more pressing and passionate; but all to little effect; the favours which my goddess bestowed upon me, only serving to make me sigh after those which she refused; but though the barbarous creature got into her coach, that waited at the door, I went home very well satisfied with my good fortune,

although I was not yet perfectly happy. 'If,' said I to myself, 'I have not been able to obtain the height of my wishes, it is because my princess is a lady of rank and delicacy, who thinks it indecent to yield to my transports during the first interview. The pride of her birth has retarded my happiness; which, however, is only delayed for a few days.' Not but that I had likewise some suspicions, that the whole affair was a well-concerted trick. But I loved to consider it in the most favourable point of view, and to preserve the advantageous opinion I had conceived of the lady, with whom I had agreed to meet again next day; the hope of accomplishing my wishes giving me a taste, by anticipation, of the pleasures I expected to enjoy.

With my fancy full of these smiling images, I returned to the house of my barber, where I changed my dress, and went to wait upon my master at a tennis-court, where I knew he was. I found him engaged in play, and even perceived that he had been lucky: for he was none of those phlegmatic gamesters, who enrich or ruin themselves without changing a feature. In his prosperity, he was full of insulting raillery; but very morose, when fortune declared against him. Leaving the tennis-court in great good humour, he went directly to the Prince's Theatre, and I followed him to the playhouse door, where, giving me a ducat, 'Here, Gil Blas,' said he, 'since I have been lucky, thou shalt feel the effects of it; go and enjoy thyself with thy companions; and, about midnight, come to me at the house of Arsenia, where I am to sup with Don Alexo Segiar.' So saying, he went in; and I remained, thinking how I should spend my ducat according

to the intention of the donor. 'I was not long in suspense. Clarino, Don Alexo's valet, appeared all of a sudden, and I carried him to the next tavern, where we regaled ourselves till twelve o'clock; and from thence repaired together to the house of Arsenia, where he was likewise ordered to rendezvous. A little lacquey opened the door, and introduced us into a parlour, where the waiting-women of Arsenia and Florimonda sat together, laughing as if for a wager, while their mistresses entertained our masters above.

The arrival of two merry fellows, who had supped to their satisfaction, could not be disagreeable to chambermaids, especially to those of the actresses; but what was my astonishment, when, in the person of one of them, I beheld my widow, my adorable widow, whom I believed a marchioness or countess! She seemed no less surprised at seeing her Don Cæsar de Ribera metamorphosed into the valet de chambre of a beau: however, we observed one another without being disconcerted; and both, at one time, were seized with such a violent inclination to laugh, that we could not help indulging it. After which Laura (so was my mistress called) taking me aside, while Clarino made up to her companion, very graciously presented her hand, saying, softly, 'Take it, Don Cæsar; instead of reproaching, let us compliment one another, my friend; you performed your part to admiration, and I did not behave amiss in mine. What say you? confess that you took me for one of those fine ladies of quality, who amuse themselves with intrigues.' 'It is true,' answered I; 'but whosoever you are, my queen, I have not changed my sentiments with my dress: I beg you will accept

my services, and allow the valet de chambre of Don Matthias to finish that which Don Cæsar had so happily begun.' 'Yes,' said she; 'I love thee still better in thy own character, than in that of another: thou art just such a man as I am a woman; and that is the strongest approbation I can bestow. I therefore receive thee into the crowd of my adorers; we shall have no more occasion for the misery of the old woman; for thou mayest come hither with the utmost freedom: we ladies of the stage live without constraint, and helter-skelter with the men. The effects of this communication are sometimes very visible indeed; but the town laughs at them; and our business, thou knowest, is to divert it.'

Here we broke off, because there were others present, and the conversation became general, sprightly, joyous, and full of palpable *double entendres*. Every one bore a part; Arsenia's maid in particular, my lovely Laura, shone very much, and showed a good deal more wit than virtue. On the other hand, our masters and the actresses often burst out into long fits of laughter, which we overheard; and from which we concluded, that their discourse was much of the same stamp with our own. If all the fine things which were said that night at Arsenia's had been committed to writing, they would have composed, I believe, a treatise very instructive for youth. In the mean time, the hour of retreat, that is, the dawn, arrived, and we were obliged to part. Clarino followed Don Alexo, and I went home with Don Matthias.

CHAPTER VI.

The conversation of some noblemen, about the players of the Prince's company.

That day, while my master was dressing, he received a billet from Don Alexo Segiar, desiring his company at his house, whither he went; and found with him the Marquis of Zeneta, and another young nobleman of a good mien, whom I had never seen before. 'Don Matthias,' said Segiar to my master, presenting the unknown cavalier, 'this is Don Pompeio de Castro, a relation of mine, who has been at the court of Portugal almost from his infancy: he arrived at Madrid last night, and will set out to-morrow for Lisbon; so that, as he can spare me only one day, I am resolved to enjoy the precious opportunity; and, in order to make it the more agreeable to him, have called you and the Marquis of Zeneta to my assistance.' Upon this, my master and Don Alexo's kinsman embraced and complimented one another; and I was much pleased with the discourse of Don Pompeio, who seemed to have a great share of judgment and penetration.

Having dined at Segiar's, these noblemen amused themselves at cards, till the hour of going to the play; and then went all together to the Prince's Theatre, to see a new tragedy, entitled, The Queen of Carthage. After the representation of the piece, they returned, and supped where they had dined. The conversation, at first, turned on the piece they had seen perform-

ed, and afterwards upon the actors. 'As for the work itself,' cried Don Matthias,' 'I have no great opinion of it; it makes Æneas still more insipid than he is represented in the Æneid; but every body must agree it was divinely played. What says Signior Don Pompeio? he does not seem to be of my way of thinking.' 'Gentlemen,' said that cavalier, smiling, 'I have perceived you so much charmed with your players, and, in particular, with your actresses, that I ought not to be so bold as to signify my dissent from your opinions.' 'You are much in the right,' said Don Alexo in a jocular manner; 'your censures will be very unseasonable here; and you ought to show some respect for our actresses before us, who are the trumpets of their reputation. As we drink with them every day, we can do no less than warrant them perfect in their vocation, and even give them certificates, if there should be occasion for it.' 'I do not at all doubt it,' answered his relation, 'and dare say you would do the same for their morals, so much are you their friends.'

'Your comedians at Lisbon,' said the Marquis of Zeneta, with a sneer, 'are, doubtless, much better than ours.' 'Yes, certainly,' replied Don Pompeio; 'at least there are some of them who have no defect.' 'And these,' resumed the Marquis, 'may depend upon your certificate.' 'I have no connexion with them,' said Don Pompeio; 'and as I never enter into their parties of pleasure, can judge of their merit without prejudice. But do you really,' added he, 'think your company so excellent?—'No, faith!' said the Marquis; 'I believe no such thing: and provided you give me leave to defend a very small

number of the players, I will willingly give up all the rest. Wont you allow that she who played the part of Dido, is an admirable actress? did she not represent that queen with all the dignity and grace which is conformable to the idea we have of her? and did you not admire her art in engaging the mind of the spectator, and making him feel the emotions of all those passions that are expressed? She may be said to be consummately skilled in all the refinements of declamation.'—'I agree,' said Don Pompeio, 'that she knows how to awake and touch the passions of the audience; no player had ever more feeling, and, on the whole, her representation is very fine; but she is far from being a perfect actress: I was shocked with two or three things in her performance. When she would express surprise, she rolls her eyes in such an extravagant manner, as very ill becomes the deportment of a princess. Add to this, that in raising her voice, which is naturally low, she corrupts the sweetness of it, and produces a very disagreeable croaking: besides, in more places than one, she gave reason to suspect that she did not very well understand her part; but, however, I am inclined to impute this rather to inattention than want of capacity.'

'By what I can see,' said Don Matthias to the critic, 'you will scarce write a panegyric on our actresses.' 'Pardon me,' replied Don Pompeio, 'I can discover great talents through their defects. I own, I was enchanted with that actress who performed the part of a chambermaid in the interludes; she has a fine genius, treads the stage gracefully, and every witticism she utters is seasoned with a sarcastic smile, full of charms, which very much enhances the value of what is said.

She may, indeed, be blamed for indulging her fire, sometimes, a little too much, and transgressing the bounds of modest assurance: but we must not be too severe; and I could only wish that she would correct one bad habit she has contracted. Oftimes, in the middle of a serious scene, she interrupts the performance all of a sudden, by yielding to a silly desire of laughing, with which she is seized You'll say she is applauded by the pit, even at these times: there, I own, she is lucky.'

'Well, what do you think of the men?' said the Marquis, interrupting him; 'surely you'll charge them full volley, since you have been so unmerciful to the women.' 'No,' said Don Pompeio, 'I think you have some promising young actors; and am particularly pleased with that fat comedian who acted the part of Dido's prime minister: he repeats very naturally, and declaims just as they do in Portugal.' 'If he can please you,' said Segiar, 'you must be charmed with the action of him who played the part of Æneas. Is not he a great comedian? an original?' 'Very original,' replied the critic; 'his cadence is quite peculiar, and his tones abundantly shrill: he almost always deserts nature; hurries over the words which contains the sentiment, and places the emphasis where it should not be; making pauses even on articles and conjunctions. He diverted me very much; particularly when he expressed to his confidant the violence he did himself in abandoning the princess; never was grief more comically expressed.' 'Softly, cousin,' replied Don Alexo; 'thou wilt make us believe, by and by, that there is not a great deal of taste at the court of Portugal. Dost thou know that

the actor of whom we speak is reckoned a phœnix? Didst thou not hear what claps of applause he obtained? A plain proof that he is far from being contemptible.' 'That is no proof at all,' answered Don Pompeio: 'Gentlemen,' added he, 'let us not, I beg of you, lay any stress upon the applause of the pit, which is often bestowed very unseasonably; nay, more seldom on true merit than on false, as Phædrus observes, by an ingenious fable, which I beg leave to repeat. Here it is:

'The inhabitants of a certain city being assembled in public to see pantomimes, there was, among the performers, a favourite actor whom they applauded every moment. This buffoon having a mind to close the scene with a new kind of representation, appeared alone upon the stage, stooped down, covered his head with his cloak, and squeaking like a pig, acquitted himself so well, that the audience actually imagined he had one under his clothes: they ordered him therefore to strip; which he having done, and nothing appearing, the whole assembly thundered applause A peasant, who happened to be one of the spectators, shocked at these expressions of admiration, cried—"Gentlemen, you have little cause to be charmed with that buffoon, who is not such an exquisite actor as you imagine: I can play the pig better than he; and, if you doubt it, come hither again to-morrow at this hour." The people, prepossessed in favour of their pantomimes, reassembled next day in greater numbers, rather to hiss the peasant than see what he could do. The two rivals appearing on the stage, the buffoon began, and was applauded more than ever: then the countryman stooping in his turn, and

muffling his head in his cloak, pinched the ear of a real pig, which he held under his arm, and made it squeak most piercingly: nevertheless, the audience gave the preference to the pantomime; and hooted the peasant, who all of a sudden producing the pig to the spectators, "Gentlemen," said he, "it is not me whom you hiss, but this poor pig himself; such excellent judges you are!"

'Cousin,' said Alexo, 'thy fable is too severe: but notwithstanding thy pig, we will not give up our opinion. Let us change the discourse,' added he; 'I am tired of this subject. So, thou wilt depart to-morrow, in spite of my desire to enjoy thy company a little longer?' 'I wish I could make a longer stay at Madrid,' replied his kinsman, 'but it is not in my power. I have told you already, that I came to the court of Spain about an affair of state; and, at my arrival yesterday, had an audience of the prime minister, whom I shall see again to-morrow morning; immediately after which, I shall set out on my return to Lisbon.' 'Thou art become altogether Portuguese,' said Segiar, 'and, in all likelihood, will never return to live in Madrid.' 'I believe I shall not,' answered Don Pompeio; 'for I am so happy as to be beloved by the King of Portugal, and enjoy a great deal of pleasure at his court: but, notwithstanding his kindness to me, would you believe that I have been on the point of quitting his dominions for ever?' 'Pray tell us the reason,' said Don Alexo. 'With all my heart,' answered Don Pompeio; 'and, at the same time, I will relate the story of my life.'

CHAPTER VII.

The History of Don Pompeio De Castro.

'Don Alexo,' added he, 'knows, that while I was yet a boy, I resolved to carry arms; and that, seeing our own country in profound peace, I went to Portugal, from whence I passed over into Africa with the Duke of Braganza, who gave me employment in the army under his command. Being a younger brother, of very small fortune, I was under a necessity of signalizing myself in such a manner as to attract the notice of the general; and did my duty so well, that the duke promoted and put me in a condition to serve with honour. After a long war, the issue of which you all know, I attached myself to the court; and the king, upon the recommendation of the general officers, gratified me with a considerable pension. Sensible of this monarch's generosity, I lost no occasion of manifesting my gratitude by my assiduity; and was always in attendance at those hours in which people are permitted to pay their respects; by which behaviour, I insensibly acquired the love of that prince, who honoured me with new favours.

'Having one day distinguished myself at the ring, and a bull-fight that preceded it, the whole court commended my strength and address; and when I returned home, loaded with applause, I found a billet, importing, that a lady, the conquest of whom ought to flatter me more than all

the honour I had that day acquired, wanted to converse with me; and that I should, in the twilight, repair to a certain place that was described. This letter gave me more pleasure than all the praise I had received; and I imagined that the person who wrote it, must be a lady of the first quality. You may easily guess, that I flew to the rendezvous, where an old woman being in waiting, to serve as a guide, introduced me, by a little garden-door, into a great house, and shut me in a rich closet, saying, "Stay here, until I inform my mistress of your arrival." I perceived a great many curious things in this closet, which was enlightened by a great number of wax-candles; but my sole view in considering its magnificence, was to confirm myself in the opinion I had already conceived of the lady's rank. If all that I saw seemed to assure me she was a person of the first quality, when she appeared, I was convinced of it, by her noble and majestic air: nevertheless, I was mistaken.

"Signior Cavalier," said she, "after the advances I have made, it would be ridiculous to conceal the tender sentiments I have for you; which, however, were not inspired by that merit you have this day shown before the whole court; that only has hastened the discovery; for I have seen you more than once, and inquired into your character; which pleases me so much, that I determined to follow my inclination. Do not imagine," added she, "that you have made a conquest of some duchess: I am no other than the widow of a simple officer of the king's guards: but what makes your victory still more glorious, is the preference I give you to one of the greatest lords of the kingdom. The Duke of Almeyda

is in love with me, and spares nothing to inflame me with a mutual passion; but hitherto he has been unsuccessful, and I suffer his addresses only through vanity."

'Though I found by her discourse I had to do with a coquette, I thought myself very much obliged to fortune for this adventure. Donna Hortensia (so was the lady called) was still in the prime of youth; and I was dazzled with her beauty: besides, she offered me the possession of a heart which would not yield to the addresses of a duke. What a triumph was this for a young Spanish cavalier! I accordingly threw myself at her feet, thanked her for her goodness, said all that a man of gallantry could utter on such an occasion, and she had reason to be satisfied with the transports of my gratitude. We parted the best friends in the world, after having agreed to see one another every night on which she should be disengaged from the Duke of Almeyda, and this she promised to advertise me of punctually; in which she did not fail; so that, in a word, I became the Adonis of this new Venus.

'But the pleasures of life are far from being eternal! Whatever measures the lady could take to conceal our correspondence from my rival, he did not fail to get notice of the whole of what it was so much our interest to keep from his knowledge. A malecontent chambermaid informed him of the affair; and that lord, naturally generous, but withal haughty, jealous, and passionate, was incensed at my presumption: rage and jealousy took possession of his soul; and following the dictates of his fury, he resolved to avenge himself of me in an infamous manner. One night, while I was with Hortensia, he waited for me at

the little garden-door, attended by all his footmen, armed with clubs; and as soon as I came out, making these wretches seize me, ordered them to cudgel me to death. "Strike," said he; "and let the audacious villain perish under your hands; for so I am resolved to punish his insolence." He had no sooner spoke these words, than his people assaulted me all together, and gave me so many blows, that I lay stretched upon the ground without sense or motion: after which they retired with their master, who had regaled himself with this cruel execution, and I remained as they left me during the rest of the night. At break of day, some people happened to pass, and perceiving still some life in me, were so charitable as to carry me to the house of a surgeon: luckily my wounds were not mortal, and I fell into the hands of a skilful artist, who made a perfect cure of me in two months; at the end of which time I repaired again to court, and resumed my former way of living; save that I never went back to Hortensia, who on her part took no step to see me again, because the duke, on these terms, had pardoned her infidelity.

'My adventure being universally known, and nobody suspecting my courage, every one was astonished to see me as tranquil as if I had not received an affront; for I imparted my thoughts to no man breathing, and seemed to be void of all resentment; so that people did not know what to think of my feigned insensibility. Some believed that, notwithstanding my courage, the rank of my antagonist kept me in awe, and obliged me to digest the injury; others, with more reason, suspected my silence, and looked upon the peaceable appearance I put on, as a

deceitful calm. Of this opinion was the king, who did not think me a person that would leave such an outrage unpunished; but believed that I would not fail to revenge myself as soon as I could find a favourable opportunity. That he might know whether or not he guessed my sentiments aright, he called me one day into his closet, where he said, "Don Pompeio, I know the accident which has happened to you; and am, I confess, surprised at your tranquillity, which must certainly be dissimulation." "Sire," I replied, "I know not who was the aggressor, having been attacked in the dark by people unknown; so that I must console myself for the misfortune as well as I can."—"No, no," said the king, "you must not think to dupe me with that evasion, which is all dissembled: I have been informed of the whole affair; the Duke of Almeyda has given you a mortal affront. You are a gentleman and a Castilian; and I know what these qualities oblige you to do. You have formed a resolution to avenge yourself. Communicate your scheme to me; I insist upon it—and don't be afraid that you shall have cause to repent of making me your confidante."

"Since your Majesty," answered I, "commands it, I will discover my sentiments. Yes, Sire, I intend to take vengeance for the affront I have suffered. Every one who bears the name of a gentleman, is accountable for it to his family You know the unworthy treatment I have received; and I purpose to assassinate the Duke of Almeyda, to revenge myself in a manner suitable to the offence. I will plunge a poniard in his breast, or shoot him through the head, and escape, if I can, into Spain. This is my design"

"It is a violent one," said the king; "nevertheless, I cannot condemn it, after the cruel outrage which the Duke of Almeyda has committed upon you: he is worthy of the chastisement you reserve for him; but do not execute your enterprise in a hurry. Leave it to me to find out an expedient for bringing you to an accommodation." "Ah, Sire!" cried I, very much chagrined; "why do you oblige me to reveal my secret? What expedient can—" "If I don't find one to your satisfaction," said he, interrupting me, "you may put your resolution in practice. I don't intend to abuse the confidence you have reposed in me, and will by no means betray your honour: so that you may make yourself easy on that score."

'I was greatly at a loss to know in what manner the king pretended to terminate this affair in an amicable manner: and this is the method he took. In a private conversation with the Duke of Almeyda, "My lord," said he, "you have injured Don Pompeio de Castro; and as you are not ignorant of his being a man of illustrious birth, and a gentleman whom I love on account of his faithful services, you ought to give him satisfaction." "I am not of a humour to refuse it," answered the duke; "if he complains of my wrath, I am ready to do him justice in the field." "You must give him another sort of reparation," replied the king. "A Spanish gentleman understands the point of honour too well, to fight openly with a secret assassin. I can give thee no other name; and you cannot expiate the indignity of your action any other way, than by presenting your enemy with a cane, and submitting to a retaliation." "O Heavens!" cried the

duke; "what, Sire! would you have a man of my rank condescend to humble himself before a simple cavalier, and allow himself to be caned?"—"No," replied the monarch; "I will make Don Pompeio promise that he will not strike you. Only ask pardon for the violence you committed, and present him with a cane—that is all I expect of you." "And that is too much to expect from me, Sire," said the duke interrupting him hastily; "I will rather continue exposed to the secret shafts of his revenge." "Your life is dear to me," said the king; "and my desire is, that this affair may have no bad consequences. To bring it to a conclusion the less disagreeably for you, I will be the only witness to that satisfaction which I insist on your making to the Spaniard."

"The king had occasion for all his power over the duke, to bring him to this mortifying condescension. However, he succeeded; and afterwards sending for me, recounted the discourse he had with my enemy, and asked if I would be satisfied with the reparation agreed upon between them. I answered in the affirmative, and gave my word and honour, that far from striking the offender, I would not even accept of the cane he should present to me. Things being regulated in this manner, the duke and I, one day, went at a certain hour to the king, who, shutting himself up with us in the closet, "Come," said he to the duke, "acknowledge your fault, and deserve to be forgiven." Upon this my enemy made his apology, and presented me with the cane which he had in his hand. "Don Pompeio," said the monarch to me that instant, "take the cane, and

let not my presence hinder you from satisfying your injured honour: I acquit you of the promise you made, not to strike the duke." "No, Sir," answered I, "it is sufficient that he submits to be beaten; an injured Spaniard asks no more."— "Well," replied the king, "since you are contented with that satisfaction, you may now enjoy the privilege of a regular process: measure your swords, and determine your quarrel like men of honour." "It is what I ardently desire!" cried the Duke of Almeyda, with precipitation, "and that alone is capable of consoling me for the shameful condescension I have made."

'So saying, he went away, full of rage and confusion; and two hours after sent to let me know that he waited for me in a private place. Thither I repaired, and found that lord in a humour to fight heartily. He was not quite forty, and wanted neither courage nor skill; so that the match was pretty equal. "Come, Don Pompeio," said he, "let us decide our difference here: both of us ought to be exasperated to the highest pitch; you, for the treatment you have received at my hands; and I for having asked your pardon." With these words he drew upon me so suddenly, that I had no time to make any reply, and pushed with great vigour. But I had the good fortune to parry all his thrusts, and attacked him in my turn, when I found I had to do with an antagonist who knew how to defend as well as to assault; and I don't know what might have happened, if he had not made a false step in retreating, and fallen backward. I stopt immediately, and bid him get up; and he answered, "Why do you spare me? I am injured by your pity." "I

will not wrong my glory so much," said I, "as to take the advantage of your misfortune; get up once more, and let us fight it out."

"Don Pompeio," said he, rising, "after this instance of your generosity, honour will not permit me to use my sword against you. What would the world say of me should I kill you? I should be looked upon as a coward, who had taken the life of a person who had it in his power to deprive me of mine. I can, therefore no longer fight against you, and I feel the warm transports of gratitude succeed those furious emotions which reigned within my breast. Don Pompeio," added he, "let our mutual hatred cease: let us even go further, and be friends."—"Ah, my lord," cried I, "I embrace the agreeable proposal with joy! I vow the most sincere friendship; and, as the first proof, promise never to set foot within the door of Donna Hortensia, even though she should desire to see me."—"It is I," said he, "who must yield that lady to you; you have a juster title to her, since her inclination is fixed upon you."—"No, no," cried I, interrupting him, "you love her; and the favours which she might bestow on me, would give you pain: I sacrifice them, therefore, to your repose."—"Ah, too generous Castilian!" replied the duke, locking me in his arms, "I am charmed with your sentiments! What remorse do they produce within me! With what grief, with what shame do I reflect on the outrage you received! The satisfaction I gave you in the king's closet seems now too slight; I will make a better reparation for the injury; and in order to efface the dishonour of it entirely, I offer one of my nieces to you in marriage; she is a rich heiress,

not yet fifteen, and still more beautiful than young."

'I made my compliments to the duke in such expressions of acknowledgment, as the honour of entering into his alliance inspired; and in a very few days married his niece. The whole court congratulated him on his generosity to a gentleman whom he had covered with ignominy; and my friends rejoiced with me, on the happy conclusion of an adventure which seemed to promise a more melancholy issue. Since that time, gentlemen, I live agreeably at Lisbon, beloved by my wife, of whom I am still fond: the Duke of Almeyda gives me every day fresh proofs of his friendship; and I dare boast of being pretty well with the king of Portugal, the importance of this my journey to Madrid, which I undertook by his order, being a sufficient evidence of his esteem.'

CHAPTER VIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was obliged to seek a new place.

Such was the story that Don Pompeio recounted, and which the valet of Don Alexo and I overheard, although they had taken the precaution of sending us away before it was begun: but, instead of retiring, we stopped at the door, which we had left half open, and from thence lost not a word of what was said. After this, the noblemen set in to drinking, but their debauch did not last till day; because Don Pompeio,

who was to attend the prime minister in the morning, was very desirous of a little rest. Accordingly, the Marquis of Zeneta and my master embraced that cavalier, bid him adieu, and left him with his kinsman.

We went to bed, for this time, before morn; and Don Matthias, when he awaked, invested me with a new employment. 'Gil Blas,' said he, 'take paper and ink, and write two or three letters, which I will dictate; henceforward, thou art my secretary.'—'Good!' said I to myself, 'another addition to my functions. As a lacquey, I follow my master every where; as a valet de chambre, help him to dress; and write under him as his secretary. Heaven be praised! I act, like Hecate, in a threefold capacity.'—'Thou dost not know,' added he, 'what I am about, which is briefly this—but be secret, for thy life shall answer it. As I sometimes meet with people who boast of their good fortune in love-intrigues, I am resolved, in order to excel them all, to have always in my pocket feigned letters from women, which I will read on such occasions. This will afford me some diversion; and, more happy than those of my fellows, who acquire conquests only for the pleasure of making them public, I will publish those which I have not had the trouble to make: but remember to disguise thy hand in such a manner, as that the billets may not appear to be written by the same person.'

Upon this, I took paper, pen, and ink, and sat down to obey Don Matthias, who at first dictated a love-letter in these terms:

'You was not to-night at the place of assignation. Ah, Don Matthias! what can you say to

justify yourself? How much have I been mistaken, and how well have I been punished for having the vanity to think that you would sacrifice all the amusements and business of the gay world to the pleasure of seeing

DONNA CLARA MENDOZA.'

The next billet he made me write, was in the name of a lady who preferred him to a prince; and the last, from one who told him, that if she was sure of his discretion, she would make a voyage with him to the Island of Cythera. He was not satisfied with having dictated these fine epistles; he obliged me also to subscribe them with the names of ladies of quality. Upon which, I could not help observing, that I thought it a ticklish affair; but he desired me to keep my advice to myself, until he should have occasion to ask it. I was therefore obliged to execute his commands in silence. This being done, he got up, dressed, put the letters in his pocket, and went out; and I followed him to the house of Don Juan de Moncada, who had invited five or six gentlemen of his friends to dinner.

The entertainment was sumptuous; and mirth, the best ingredient in all banquets, reigned during the repast. All the guests contributed to enliven the conversation; some by raillery, and others by recounting exploits of which they themselves were the heroes. My master, unwilling to lose such a fair opportunity of profiting by the letters he had made me write, read them aloud, with such an air of assurance, that (his secretary excepted) every body seemed to believe them genuine. Among the gentlemen before whom he was guilty of this effrontery, there was one

Don Lope de Velasco, a very sedate man; who, instead of rejoicing, like the rest, at the success of the reader, coldly asked, if the conquest of Donna Clara had cost him dear. 'Almost less than nothing,' replied Don Matthias: 'she made all the advances. Having seen me in the park, I happened to please her: upon which I was followed by her order; and, as soon as she learned who I was, she wrote to me, appointing an assignation at her house in the night, when all the family should be a-bed. I obeyed the summons, and was introduced to her apartment. I am too much of a gentleman to tell what followed.'

At this laconic detail, the lord of Velasco changed countenance; and it was not difficult to perceive what concern he had in the lady in question. 'All these billets,' said he, darting a furious look at my master, 'are absolutely false, and especially that which you boast of having received from Donna Clara de Mendoza, than whom there is not a more chaste young lady in Spain. A gentleman, no ways your inferior either in birth or personal merit, has done every thing in his power, during two whole years, to make an impression on her heart; and scarce has he been able to obtain the most innocent favours; though he has reason to flatter himself, that, if she was capable of granting any other kind of indulgence, it would be to him alone.'—'Hey-dey! who says any thing to the contrary?" said Don Matthias, with an air of raillery. 'I agree with you that she is a lady of honour; and, for my part, I am a young fellow of honour; consequently you ought to believe, that nothing which was not very honourable passed between us.'—'Ah! this is too much,' cried Don Lope, inter-

rupting him; 'jesting apart, you are an impostor. Donna Clara never made an assignation with you at night; and I will not suffer you to blacken her reputation. I shall say no more at present.' Having thus expressed himself, he looked sternly at the whole company, and retired in such a manner, as to make me believe that this affair would have very bad consequences. My master, who was brave enough for a lord of his character, despising the threats of Don Lope, 'What a fool there is!' cried he, bursting into a fit of laughter; 'your knights-errant pretend only to maintain the beauty of their mistresses; but he, forsooth, must vindicate the chastity of his. Now this, to me, seems still more extravagant.'

Velasco's retreat, which was in vain opposed by Moncado, did not at all disturb the banquet; the cavaliers, without taking much notice of it, continued their mirth, and did not part till next morning at five o'clock, when my master and I went home to bed. I was overwhelmed with drowsiness, and hoped to enjoy a good sleep; but I reckoned without my host, or rather without our porter, who came and wakened me an hour after, telling me that there was a young man at the gate, who wanted to speak with me. 'Ah, curse thee for a porter!' cried I, yawning; 'dost thou consider that I have just now got to-bed? Tell the young man that I am asleep, and bid him return at another time.'—'He must speak with you instantly,' replied he; 'for he assures me that the affair will admit of no delay.' At these words I got up; and putting on my breeches and doublet only, went to the door, cursing all the way. 'Friend,' said I to the young man who waited for me, 'let me know,

if you please, what pressing affair procures me the honour of seeing you so early in the morning.'—'I have,' answered he, 'a letter for Don Matthias, to be delivered into his own hand. He must read it immediately, for it is of the utmost consequence to him: I beg you will therefore show me into his chamber.' Thinking it treated of some very important affair, I took the liberty of waking my master. 'I ask pardon,' said I to him, 'for interrupting your repose; but the importance—' 'What would'st thou have?' cried he hastily: upon which the young man who accompanied me said, 'My lord, I have a letter for you from Don Lope de Velasco.' Don Matthias took, opened, and having read it, said to Don Lope's valet, 'Hark'e, child, I would not get up before noon to make one in the best party of pleasure that ever was proposed; judge, then, if I shall rise at six o'clock in the morning to fight. Thou mayest tell thy master, if he will be in the same place half an hour after twelve, I will meet him there.' So saying, he sunk down on his bed, and fell asleep again with great expedition.

Between eleven and twelve he got up; and, dressing himself with great composure, went out, telling me he would dispense with my attendance: but I was too curious to know the consequence, to obey him in this; and therefore walked at some distance behind him to St. Jerome's Meadow, where I perceived Don Lope de Velasco waiting for him in a resolute manner. The better to observe them, I concealed myself; and, from afar, could see them meet, and begin to fight a moment after. The combat was long; each, in his turn, having pushed his antagonist

with great vigour and address; but victory declared for Don Lope, who ran my master through the body; and leaving him stretched on the ground, made off, very well satisfied with the vengeance he had taken. I ran up to the unfortunate Don Matthias, whom I found without sense, and almost without life. I was melted at the sight, and could not help shedding tears, at a death of which I had been an involuntary instrument. Notwithstanding my grief, however, I did not forget my own little concerns; but returned home with all haste; where, (without speaking a syllable of the matter,) I made up a bundle of my clothes; among which I threw, by mistake, some of my master's moveables; and when I had carried it to the barber's house, where I had left my intriguing suit, published through the whole city the fatal accident, of which I was a witness; I told it to every body who gave me the hearing; and, in particular, took care to inform Rodriguez of what had happened. He seemed less afflicted with the news, than busied about the measures he was to take on this occasion. Having assembled the servants, he ordered them to follow him; and repairing in a body to St. Jerome's Meadow, we took up our master; who, though he still breathed, died in three hours after he was carried to his own house. Thus perished Don Matthias de Silva, for having taken it into his head to read forged love-letters at an unseasonable time.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the person in whose service he engaged, after the death of Don Matthias de Silva.

A FEW days after the funeral of Don Matthias, all his servants being paid and dismissed, I fixed my abode in the house of the little barber, with whom I began to live in strict friendship; and there I promised myself more pleasure than with Melendez. As I did not want money, I was in no hurry to inquire about a new place: besides I was become nice on that point, and resolved to serve none but the quality for the future, for which reason I intended to examine narrowly into whatever post should occur, believing that there was none too good for me; so much did I then think the valet of a young nobleman preferable to all others.

In the mean time, until fortune should present such a family as I thought I deserved, I imagined nothing could be more agreeable than to consecrate my leisure to my handsome Laura, whom I had not seen since that night when we were both so pleasantly undeceived. I durst not dress in the suit of Don Cæsar de Ribera, which (unless I had assumed it for a disguise) would have made me pass for a downright madman; but my own was still very decent, and being very well equipped in stockings, shoes, and hat, I adjusted myself, with the barber's assistance, in a middle way, between Don Cæsar and Gil Blas, and in this condition repaired to Arsenia's

house; where, finding Laura alone, in the same parlour where I had seen her before, she no sooner perceived me, than she cried, 'Ha! are you there? I thought I had lost you. Seven or eight days are passed since I gave you the permission of visiting me: I see you don't abuse the liberties in which the ladies indulge you.'

I excused myself on account of my master's death, and the business in which I had been engaged, and added, in a very polite manner, that even in the midst of all my cares, the fair Laura had still kept possession of my heart. 'Well, then,' said she, 'I will reproach you no more; but own, that I have also thought of you; and as soon as I heard of the misfortune of Don Matthias, formed a project which perhaps will not displease you. Some time ago, I heard my mistress say that she wanted to have a kind of steward in the house; a young man who should understand economy, and keep an exact account of the money disbursed for housekeeping. I have cast my eyes on your lordship, and believe you would not be an improper person for that employment.'—'I perceive,' answered I, 'that I should acquit myself in it to a wonder; for I have read Aristotle's Œconomics; and as to keeping accounts, it is my chief excellence. But, child,' added I, 'there is one objection to my engaging in Arsenia's service.'—'What may that be?' said Laura. 'I have sworn,' I replied, 'never to serve a plebeian: nay, I have sworn by Styx; and if Jupiter himself durst not violate that oath, judge if a valet ought not to regard it.'—'Whom dost thou call plebeians?' said the chambermaid, with an air of disdain. Dost thou rank actresses with the wives of

counsellors and attorneys? Know, friend, that the ladies of the stage are not only noble, but arch-noble, by the alliances they contract with men of quality.'

'If that be the case, my princess,' said I, 'I may accept of the place for which you have destined me, without derogating from the dignity of my resolution.'—'Certainly,' she replied; 'to pass from the family of a beau into the service of a theatrical heroine, is still to maintain the same sphere of life; for we rank in all respects with the quality: we keep equipages like them; we live as well; and, at bottom, ought to hold the same esteem in civil life. Really,' added she, if we consider a marquis and a player, through the course of a day, we shall find them upon a pretty equal footing: for, granting that the marquis, during three parts of the day, is, by virtue of his blood, superior to the player; the actor, during the remaining part, is raised still more above the marquis, by the cue of an emperor or king whom he represents. This, in my opinion, invests us with such nobility and grandeur, as at least equals us to the people at court.'—'O! truly,' I replied, 'you are, without contradiction, on a level with the courtiers. What the deuce! players, I find, are not such scums as I imagined; and you fire me with inclination to serve such honourable people.'—'Well, then,' said she, 'come back again in two days. I ask no more time to dispose my mistress for thy reception. I will speak to her in thy behalf and, as I have some interest with her, am persuaded that thou wilt be admitted into her service.'

I thanked Laura for her friendship, and as

sured her, that I was penetrated with gratitude, which I expressed with such transports, as left her no room to doubt my sincerity. We maintained a pretty long conversation together, and it would have lasted longer, had not a little page come to tell my princess that Arsenia wanted her; upon which we parted. I quitted the house of this actress, in the sweet hope of living in it at my ease in a very short time; and did not fail to return at the time appointed. 'I was just expecting thee,' said Laura, 'in order to assure thee, that thou art now one of the household: come, follow me, and I will present thee to my mistress.' So saying, she carried me into an apartment, composed of five or six rooms of a floor, each more richly furnished than the other.

Heavens! what luxury and magnificence! I believed myself in the palace of a vice-queen; or rather thought I saw all the riches of the world amassed together in one place; for there was a variety of things produced in different nations; and one might term this apartment, the temple of some goddess, to whom every traveller, presented an offering of the rarities of his country. I perceived the divinity seated on a large satin couch, charming to the eye, and sleek with the steams of sacrifice: she was in a genteel dishabille, and her fair hands were busy in preparing a new head-dress, in which she was to perform that night. 'Madam,' said her maid, 'here is the housekeeper I mentioned. I can assure you that you will not find one more for your purpose.' Arsenia looked at me very attentively, and I had the good fortune to please her. 'Aha, Laura!' cried she, 'there's a pretty young fellow! I foresee that I shall be very well

satisfied with him.'—Then addressing herself to me, 'Child,' said she, 'I like your appearance, and am at a word: if you serve me well, you shall have no cause to complain.'—'I answered, that my whole study and endeavour should be to please her; and seeing that we were agreed, went to fetch my clothes, and was installed in my new office.

CHAPTER X.

Which is as short as the foregoing.

It being near play time, my mistress bid Laura and me follow her to the theatre. We went accordingly to her tiring-room, where she put off her ordinary dress, and took another more magnificent for her appearance on the stage. The curtain being drawn, Laura conducted and sat down by me in a place where we could both see and hear the actors perfectly well. I was disgusted with the greatest part of them, doubtless because Don Pompeio had prejudiced me against them. Several, however, were very much applauded, and, among these, even some who put me in mind of the fable of the pig.

Laura told me the names of all the actors and actresses as they presented themselves; and, not contented with this, the satirical baggage described their characters nicely as they appeared. 'This here,' said she, 'is a noodle; that fellow is a brute; and that minx whom you see with an air more lewd than engaging, is called Rosarda; a very bad acquisition for the company: she

should be enrolled in the troop that is raising by order of the viceroy of New Spain, to be transported forthwith into America. Observe that luminous constellation advancing; that fair setting sun, known by the name of Castilda: if she had exacted a stone from each of her lovers, as a princess of Egypt is said to have done heretofore, she could have raised a pyramid which would have touched the third heaven.' In short, Laura gave no quarter: her malicious tongue did not even spare her own mistress.

Nevertheless, I will confess my weakness; I was charmed with my chambermaid, though her character was not morally good. She satirized so agreeably, that I was even in love with her malice. Between the acts she got up, to go and see if Arsenia wanted her; but instead of returning immediately to her place, she amused herself behind the scenes, in listening to the soft things that were said by the men who flattered her. I followed her, for once, to observe: and perceived that she had a great many acquaintances; having reckoned no less than three actors, who, one after another, stopped to speak with her, and seemed to treat her with great familiarity. This was not at all agreeable to me; who, feeling for the first time what it was to be jealous, returned to my seat so pensive and melancholy, that Laura observed it as soon as she came back. 'What is the matter with thee, Gil Blas?' said she with surprise. 'What gloomy demon hath taken possession of thee since I went away? thou seemest sad and dejected.'—'I have too much reason to be so, my princess,' answered I; 'you have a little too much vivacity in your behaviour; I have observed you with the actors.'

—'A pleasant cause of melancholy, indeed!' said she, laughing. 'How! does that give thee any uneasiness? Truly thou art a mere novice: but thou wilt see a great many other strange things among us, and must accustom thyself to our easy way of life. Harbour no jealousy, child; for that, among comedians, is looked upon as ridiculous: therefore we have none of it. Fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, and cousins, with us, are the most complaisant persons on earth, and generally make settlements for their own family.'

After having exhorted me to take umbrage at nothing, but look upon every thing with composure, she declared, that I was the happy mortal who had found the way to her heart; and assured me, that her love should always rest on me alone. On this assurance, which, however, I might have distrusted without the imputation of being too suspicious, I promised never more to be alarmed, and kept my word; for that very evening I saw her in close conversation, and heard her laugh heartily with several different men. When the play was over, we went home with our mistress, where Florimonda soon after arrived, with three old noblemen and an actor, to supper. Besides Laura and me, there were, of servants in the house, a cook-maid, a coachman, and a page, who all joined in preparing supper. The cook, who was no less dexterous than Dame Jacinta, was assisted by the coachman in dressing the victuals; while the chambermaid and page laid the cloth; and I furnished the beaufet with the finest plate, and several cups of gold, which were offered to the goddess of the temple. I stored it likewise with bottles of

the choicest wines; serving in my own person as cup-bearer, to show my mistress that I could turn my hand to every thing. The deportment of the actresses, during the repast, filled me with admiration: they assumed airs of consequence, and imagined themselves women of the first rank. Far from addressing the noblemen with the title of Your Excellence, they did not even give them that of Your Lordship; but called them simply by their names: true, indeed, these very noblemen had spoiled, and made them so vain, by suffering them to be so familiar. As for the actor, he, like a player, used to perform the hero, treated them without ceremony, drank to their health, and maintained (as one may say) the upper-end of the table. 'Upon my soul,' said I to myself, 'when Laura demonstrated the equality of the marquis and player in the day-time, she might have added, that they are still more so in the night, since they spend it thus in drinking together.'

Arsenia and Florimonda being naturally wanton, a thousand hardy expressions escaped them, mingled with small favours and toyings, which were exquisitely relished by these old sinners. While my mistress amused the one with a little innocent ribaldry, her friend, sitting between the other two, did not act the Susanna with them. While I was considering this picture, which had but too many charms for a young fellow like me, the dessert was brought in: upon which I set wine and glasses on the table, and went to supper with Laura, who waited for me. 'Well, Gil Blas,' said she, 'what is thy opinion of those noblemen thou hast seen?'—'They are, doubtless,' answered I, 'adorers of Arsenia and

Florimonda.'—'No,' said she, 'they are old le-chers, who visit coquettes without attaching themselves to them, and ask only small compliances, paying generously for trifling favours they receive. Thank heaven! Florimonda and my mistress are at present without lovers; I mean, such lovers as assume the husband, and want to engross all the pleasures of the house, because they support the expense of it. As for my own part, I am very glad it is so; and maintain, that a coquette of sense ought to fly these sort of engagements. Why should she give up her liberty to a master? It is better to acquire an equipage penny by penny, than have one at such a price.'

When Laura was in a speaking humour, (which was almost always the case) words cost her nothing. Heaven! what a volubility of tongue was she mistress of! She told me a thousand adventures which had happened to the actresses of the Prince's company; and I concluded from her discourse, that I could not be in a better situation to become perfectly acquainted with vice. I was unhappily of an age when this did not create much horror; and besides, the chambermaid painted these irregularities so artfully, that I beheld only the delicious side of them. She had no time to relate the tenth part of the exploits of the actresses; for she had spoke but three hours when the nobleman and player withdrew with Florimonda, whom they conducted to her own house.

After they were gone, my mistress giving me money, said, 'There, Gil Blas, are ten pistoles to go to market to-morrow morning: five or six of our gentlemen and ladies are to dine with me, so

'nat you must take care and have every thing in plenty.' 'Madam,' answered I, 'with this sum I'll engage to entertain the whole troop.'— 'Friend,' replied Arsenia, 'be so good as to correct your expressions: you must not call them the troop, but the company. We say, a troop of thieves, a troop of beggars, and a troop of authors, but learn to say a company of comedians. The corps of actors in Madrid especially, deserve to be called a company.' I asked pardon for having used such a disrespectful term, and most humbly begged she would excuse my ignorance; protesting, that for the future, whensoever I should mention the gentlemen actors of Madrid in a collective capacity, I would always call them the company.

CHAPTER XL

How the players lived together; and their treatment of authors.

I WENT to market next morning, in order to begin my office of butler; and as it was a meagre day, bought, by order of my mistress, some good fat pullets, rabbits, partridges, and other wild fowl; for as the gentlemen players were not altogether satisfied with the behaviour of the church toward them, they did not think proper to adhere scrupulously to its commandments. I brought home more victuals than would have sufficed twelve honest gentlemen during three days in carnival time; so that the cook had work enough for the whole morning While she prepared the

dinner, Arsenia got up, and remained at her toilet till noon, when Signiors Rosimiro and Ricardo (two actors) arrived: Constantia and Celinaura (two actresses) came soon after; and at last Florimonda appeared, accompanied by a man who had all the appearance of a finished coxcomb. His hair was tied behind in a very foppish manner, his hat adorned with a plume of green feathers, his breeches smooth and straight, and his shirt, which was very fine, was bordered with a handsome lace, displayed at the slashes of his doublet. His gloves and handkerchief were contained within the hilt of his sword, and he wore his cloak with a grace altogether peculiar.

Though he had a good mien, and was very well made, I no sooner saw him, than remarking in him something singular, I said to myself, 'This gentleman must certainly be an original.' I was not mistaken; for he was a man of a very extraordinary character. As soon as he entered Arsenia's apartment, he ran with open arms, and embraced the actresses and actors one after another, with gestures still more extravagant than those of the beaus. My opinion was not changed when I heard him speak; for he made affected pauses, and pronounced his words with great emphasis, accommodating his looks and gestures to the subject. Having asked Laura who that gentleman was, 'I don't wonder,' said she, 'at thy curiosity: it is impossible to see and hear Signior Carlos Alonso de la Ventoleria, even for once, without feeling the same emotion. I will describe him to the life. In the first place, he has been a player; but quitted the stage through whim, and now repents in earnest. His black hair which thou seest is dyed, as well as his eye-

brows and whiskers; for he is older than Saturn: but as his parents, when he was born, neglected to have his name inserted in the parish-register, he takes the advantage of their omission, and calls himself younger than he is by twenty good years at least. He is, moreover, the most self-conceited man in Spain, though he spent the first sixty years of his life in the grossest ignorance; but, in order to become learned, he employed a preceptor, who has taught him to spell in Latin and Greek.

'Besides, he has got an infinite number of good stories by heart, which he has repeated and vouched so often, that at length he actually believes them to be true. These he brings into conversation, and one may say, that his wit shines at the expense of his memory. He has the character of being a great actor, and I piously believe it; but, nevertheless, I will own that he does not please me. I hear him repeat sometimes in company, and among other faults, think his pronunciation too much affected, and his voice so quavering, that it gives an antic and ridiculous air to his declamation.'

Such was the picture that my sweetheart drew of this honorary stage-player; who was really, in his deportment, the most haughty mortal I had ever seen. He played the orator, too, and did not fail to produce from his budget two or three stories, which he uttered with a studied air of solemnity. On the other hand, the actresses and actors, who did not come there to hold their tongues, were not silent; but began to talk of their absent comrades, not in a very charitable manner indeed; but this must be pardoned in players as well as in authors. The conversation,

therefore, kindling against their neighbours, 'You cannot guess, ladies,' said Rosimiro, 'a new piece of finesse of our dear confederate Cesarino. He this morning purchased silk stockings, ribands, and lace, which he ordered a page to bring to the rehearsal, as if sent by a certain countess.' 'Such a piece of knavery!' said Signior de Ventoleria, with a silly vain simper; 'there was no such deceit in my time: we never dreamt of composing such stories; the ladies of quality, indeed, spared us the invention, by making the purchase themselves; it was their fancy.'—'Zooks!' said Ricardo, 'they have that fancy still; and was I permitted to explain myself—but one must be silent on these sort of adventures, especially when persons of a certain rank are concerned.'

'Gentlemen,' said Florimonda, interrupting him, 'truce with your intrigues, if you please; they are very well known to all the world, and let us talk of Imenia. They say, that nobleman who has spent so much money upon her, has left her at last.' 'Yes, truly,' cried Constantia; 'and I'll tell you more: she has lost a citizen, whom she certainly would have ruined. I know the foundation of the whole affair: her Mercury committed a terrible blunder, by carrying to the nobleman a letter she had wrote to the citizen, and giving this last the billet intended for the lord.' 'These are great losses, my dear,' replied Florimonda. 'O! as for the nobleman,' said Constantia, 'there is no great matter; he had spent almost his whole estate: but the citizen had just began his career, and had never passed through good hands, which is a thousand pities.'

In this manner they discoursed before dinner, and their conversation turned on the same subjects while they were at table. But as I should never have done, if I undertook to repeat all the expressions full of malice and folly which I heard, I hope the reader will excuse me for suppressing them, in order to describe the reception of a poor devil of an author, who came in toward the end of the repast.

Our page came, and said aloud to his mistress, 'Madam, a man in marvellous foul linen, bedaggled all over, and who, so please you, looks very much like a poet, wants to speak with you.'—'Show him up,' answered Arsenia. 'Don't stir, gentlemen; 'tis but an author.' Sure enough, it was one whose tragedy had been received; and who brought a part for my mistress. He was called Pedro de Moya; and, as he entered, made five or six profound bows to the company, who neither got up nor returned his compliment. Arsenia only answered his profusion of civility by a slight inclination of her head. He advanced into the room, trembling and confused, and let his gloves and cloak fall; which having taken up, he approached my mistress, and presented to her a paper, with more respect than that of a counsellor, when he delivers a petition to a judge; saying, 'Be so good, madam, as to accept of this part, which I take the liberty to offer.' She received it in a cold and disdainful manner, without even deigning to answer his compliment.

This, however, did not discourage our author; who, making use of the opportunity to distribute the different parts of his play, gave one to Rosimiro; and another to Florimonda, who did not treat him a whit more courteously than Arsenia

had done. On the contrary, the players, naturally very obliging, as these gentlemen commonly are, insulted him with the most cutting raillery; which Pedro de Moya felt, but durst not retort, lest his piece should suffer for his imprudence. He retired, therefore, without speaking, but sensibly touched, as I perceived, with his reception; and I believe that, in the bitterness of his resentment, he did not fail to curse within himself the players, as they deserved; and they, when he was gone, began to speak of authors with great disrespect. 'Signior Pedro de Moya,' said Florimonda, 'did not seem to go away very well satisfied.'

'Pshaw, madam!' cried Rosimiro; 'don't disturb yourself about that; authors are not worth notice; if we should treat them on equal footing, it would spoil them: I know these sorry gentlemen; they would soon forget themselves. Let us, therefore, use them like slaves, and we need not fear that we shall tire their patience; for though their displeasure may detach them from us sometimes, the fury of writing will bring them back, and they will think themselves very happy, provided we deign to act their performances.'— 'You are in the right,' said Arsenia; 'we only lose those authors whose fortunes we have made; for as soon as we have procured a good settlement for them, idleness takes possession of them, and they work no more. Luckily the company don't break their hearts, and the public is no loser by their sloth.'

These fine observations were much applauded, and it was determined, that authors, notwithstanding the ill treatment they receive, owed their all to the players, who therefore claimed the

superiority over them, and, certes, they could not despise them more.

CHAPTER XII.

Gil Blas acquires the theatrical taste, abandons himself to the pleasures of a comic life, with which, however, he is disgusted in a little time.

The company remained at table until the hour arrived of going to the theatre, whither they repaired in a body. I followed, and once more saw the play; which gave me such pleasure, that I resolved to take the same opportunity every day. In this I did not fail, and insensibly became reconciled to the actors; such is the force of custom: I was particularly charmed with those who ranted and distorted themselves most upon the stage, and was not at all singular in this way of thinking.

The beauty of the performance touched me no less than the beauty of the representation; I was quite transported with some of them; and among the rest, was prodigiously fond of those, where all the cardinals, or the twelve peers of France, appeared. I remember that, in two days, I got by heart a whole comedy, entitled, The Queen of Flowers. The Rose, who was queen, had the Violet for a confidant, and the Jessamin for her usher. I thought nothing could be more ingenious than these works, which I imagined did a great deal of honour to the taste of our nation.

I not only adorned my memory with the brightest passages from these dramatic masterpieces: I set about bringing my taste to perfection, which to accomplish, I listened with a greedy attention to all that the players said. If they praised any performance, I esteemed it; and whatsoever met with their disapprobation, was immediately despised by me; I thought they were as skilful in plays, as jewellers are in diamonds. Nevertheless, Pedro de Moya's tragedy had great success, although they had prognosticated its damnation. But even this could not make me suspect their judgment; and I chose rather to believe that the public wanted common sense, than to doubt of the company's infallibility. I was assured, however, from all quarters, that those new pieces of which the players had no good opinion, were, usually, very much applauded; and that, on the contrary, those which they received with approbation, were commonly hissed by the audience. I was told, that it was a maxim with them to judge erroneously of the works that were presented to them, and was informed of a thousand instances where the success belied their determination; but all these proofs were scarce sufficient to disabuse my understanding.

I shall never forget what happened one day, in the first representation of a new comedy, which the players had pronounced cold and tedious, and actually thought unpassable. In these sentiments they performed the first act, which met with great applause, and quite astonished them. The second act was played, and still better received than the first; upon which the actors were confounded. 'How the devil!' said

Rosmiro, 'is it possible that this comedy should take?' At last they acted the third, which gave more pleasure than the two former. 'I can't comprehend the meaning of this!' said Ricardo. 'We imagined that this piece would not please, yet every body is charmed with it!' 'Gentlemen,' said one of them very plainly, 'the reason is, because there are a thousand strokes of wit in the performance which we have not observed.'

I no longer, therefore, looked upon the players as excellent judges, but became a just appraiser of their merit: and, indeed, they justified to a tittle all the ridicule they met with from the world; for some of the actors and actresses were giddy with applause, and considering themselves as objects of admiration, thought they bestowed a favour on the public when they deigned to play. I was shocked with their faults, but unhappily too well pleased with their way of life; so that I plunged into debauchery. How could it be otherwise? Their conversation was pernicious to youth, and all I saw contributed to corrupt my morals. Had I been ignorant of what passed at the houses of Casilda, Constantia, and the other players, that of Arsenia alone was but too capable of undoing me: for, besides the old nobleman I mentioned, there came thither beaus; young heirs whom usurers enabled to spend money; and sometimes also farmers of the revenue were admitted, who, far from being gratified for their presence, as they are in their own assemblies, were obliged to pay through the nose for their reception.

Florimonda, who lived hard by, dined and supped every day with my mistress; and people were surprised at the friendship that seemed to

unite them. It afforded matter of astonishment to see coquettes live together in such good intelligence; and every body imagined that, soon or late, they would quarrel about some gallant. But the world was very much mistaken in these perfect friends, who were joined by the most solid affection. Instead of being jealous of one another, like other women, they lived in common; and chose rather to share the spoils, than foolishly dispute about the inclinations, of the men.

Laura, by the example of these illustrious associates, made the best of her youth too; and it was not without reason she had told me, that I should see strange things: however, I affected to be quite easy; because I had promised to adopt the unconcern of a player on such occasions; and thus I dissembled for some days, contenting myself with asking the names of the men with whom I found her particularly engaged. She always answered, that it was an uncle or cousin. Heavens! what a crowd of relations she had! Sure, her family was more numerous than that of King Priam; and the jade did not even confine herself to uncles and cousins, but also went abroad frequently in order to allure strangers, by acting the widow of quality, at the house of the old woman whom I mentioned before. In short, Laura (to give the reader a just and precise idea of her) was as young, as handsome, and as much a coquette, as her mistress, who had no other advantage over her, than that of diverting the town in public. I was borne down by the torrent for three weeks, during which I gave myself up to all manner of debauchery: but, at the same time, I must observe, in the midst of my

pleasures, I was frequently seized with sentiments of remorse, that proceeded from my education, and embittered all my enjoyments. Vice could not get the better of these warnings, which augmented in proportion as I became more debauched; and, by the effect of a happy disposition, I began to abhor the disorders of a theatrical life. 'Ah, wretch!' said I to myself; 'is it thus thou fulfillest the expectation of thy family? Was it not enough to cheat it, by choosing another employment than that of a tutor? Does thy servile condition hinder thee from living like an honest man? or does it become thee to live among such sinners? some of whom are possessed by envy, rage, and avarice; whilst others have banished all sense of shame. These are abandoned to intemperance and sloth; and those indulge their pride even to an excess of insolence. I am resolved; and will no longer dwell with the seven deadly sins.'

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS,

OF SANTILLANE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF MONSIEUR LE SAGE,

BY

TOBIAS SMOLLETT, M.D.,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE

ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS

OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas, being disgusted at the irregularities of the actresses, quits the service of Arsenia, and gets into a more creditable family.

A REMNANT of honour and religion, which I did not fail to preserve amidst such corruption of morals, made me resolve, not only to leave Arsenia, but also to break off all correspondence with Laura; whom, however, I could not help loving, though I was sensible of her flagrant infidelity. Happy is he who can thus profit by those moments of reflection that interrupt the pleasures which engross his attention! Early one morning, I bundled up my clothes; and, without clearing with Arsenia, who was, indeed little or nothing in my debt, or taking leave of my dear Laura, I quitted the house, where I had breathed nothing but the air of debauchery; and I had no sooner performed such a good

action, than heaven rewarded me for it, by throwing me in the way of the steward of Don Matthias, my late master. Having saluted him, he knew me, and stopped to inquire if I was in any service; to which I answered, that I had been about a minute or two out of place: for that, having lived about a month with Arsenia, whose behaviour I did not like, I had left her of my own accord, in order to preserve my innocence. The steward, as if he had been scrupulously religious, approved of my delicacy; and told me, that since I was a young man of such honour, he would make it his business to settle me in an advantageous place. He performed his promise; and that very day introduced me into the service of Don Vincent de Guzman, whose manager was one of his acquaintance.

I could not have got into a better family, and therefore had no cause to be displeased with my situation in the sequel. Don Vincent was a very rich old nobleman, who had lived many years without law-suit or wife; the physicians having deprived him of his spouse, by endeavouring to free her of a cough, which she might have preserved much longer, had she abstained from their prescriptions. Instead of marrying again, he had applied himself wholly to the education of Aurora, his only daughter, who was then going in her six-and-twentieth year, and justly passed for an accomplished young lady: for, with an uncommon share of beauty, she had an excellent genius, perfectly well cultivated. Her father, though he was no conjuror, possessed the happiest talent of managing his affairs to the best advantage; but had one fault, which, however, is pardonable in old men: he delighted

in talking, and above all things, of war and bloodshed. If any body was so unfortunate as to touch on that string in his presence, he instantly set the trumpet to his mouth; and the hearers were very happy, if they got off for the relation of two sieges and three battles. As he had spent two-thirds of his life in the army, his memory was an inexhaustible source of different actions, which were not always listened to with the same pleasure that he felt in recounting them. Besides, he stammered in his speech, and was very prolix, which rendered his manner of relating very disagreeable; otherwise, I never knew a nobleman of a better character. He had a great deal of equanimity, and was neither passionate nor whimsical; a circumstance which I admired very much in a man of quality. Though he was a good economist, he kept an honourable house; his domestics consisting of several footmen, and three women who waited on Aurora. I soon perceived that the steward of Don Matthias had procured a good post for me, and bent all my endeavours to maintain myself in it: for this purpose, I began by reconnoitering the ground; that is, studying the different humours of every body in the family; then, regulating my conduct by the observations I made, it was not long before I acquired the good-will of my master and all his servants.

When I had been about a month in Don Vincent's family, I thought I perceived that his daughter distinguished me from all the rest of the valets in the house. When her eyes were fixed upon me, I always remarked a sort of complacence in her countenance, which I could not observe when she looked at my fellows.

Had I not lived among beaus and players, it would never have come into my head to imagine that Aurora could think of me; but I was a good deal spoiled among these gentlemen, who are seldom extremely delicate in their sentiments of the most virtuous ladies. 'If,' said I to myself, 'we may believe those stage-players, they are sometimes benefited by the whims to which women of quality are subject: and how do I know that my mistress is free from such caprices? No,' added I, 'I cannot believe. She is not one of those Mesalians, who, belying the pride of their birth, humble their affections so unworthily, even to the dust, and dishonour themselves without blushing; but rather, one of those virtuous, though tender, young ladies, who, satisfied with the bounds prescribed by honour to their inclinations, make no scruple of inspiring, as well as of entertaining, a delicate passion, which yields amusement without danger.'

These were my sentiments of my mistress, though I did not know precisely how to interpret her behaviour. In the mean time, as often as she saw me, she did not fail to smile and express her joy in her countenance; so that, without passing for a fool, any man might have been ensnared by such fair appearances: I therefore could resist them no longer; but concluded that Aurora was strongly captivated with my merit, and looked upon myself as one of those happy domestics, whose servitude is sweetened by love. That I might appear in some measure less unworthy of the favour which my good fortune had procured for me, I began to take more care of my person than I had ever done before: I spent all the money I had in linen, essences, and

pomatums: the first thing I did of a morning, was to dress and perfume myself, that I might not appear in dishabille before my mistress; and with this attention to my exteriors, and other airs I assumed, in order to please, I flattered myself that my happiness was not far off.

Among Aurora's women, there was one called Ortiz, an old gentlewoman who had lived more than twenty years in the family, and nursed Don Vincent's daughter, whom she still served in quality of a duenna, though she no longer performed the disagreeable part of that function; but, on the contrary, instead of discovering, as formerly, the actions of Aurora, her sole business now was to conceal them. One evening, Dame Ortiz, having found an opportunity of speaking to me without being overheard, told me softly, that if I was wise and discreet, I would be in the garden at midnight, where I should be informed of things which I should not be sorry to hear; I answered, squeezing the duenna's hand, that I would not fail to be there; and we parted immediately, for fear of being surprised. Heavens! how did the time hang on my hands from that instant to supper, (which in our family was always over in good time,) and from thence to my master's going to bed! Every thing seemed to drag on with extraordinary slowness; and, to crown my chagrin, when don Vincent retired to his bed-chamber, instead of going to rest, he began to fight over again all his campaigns in Portugal, with which he had so often stunned me before. But one thing, which he had never done hitherto, and reserved for this evening, was to tell me the names of all the officers who had distinguished themselves in

his time, and even to recount their exploits. What did I suffer in hearing him to an end! He left off speaking, however, at last, and got into bed. Upon which I went into the little closet where I slept, from whence there was a passage, by a pair of back-stairs, into the garden, and anointed my whole body with essence; I then put on a clean shirt, strongly perfumed; and having neglected nothing which I thought might flatter the passion of my mistress, went directly to the place of assignation.

Not finding Ortiz there, I concluded that tired with waiting for me, she had returned to her apartment, and that the happy moment was past. I blamed Don Vincent for it; and, as I was cursing his campaigns, heard it strike ten. This made me believe that the clock went wrong, for I was persuaded that it was at least an hour past midnight, but I was so happily mistaken, that, a good quarter of an hour after this, I heard another clock strike ten again. 'Very well,' said I to myself, 'I have but two whole hours to dance attendance, and they shall have no cause to complain of my punctuality. What must we do till twelve? Let us take a turn in the garden, and consider the part I am to play, which is a pretty new one to me, who am but a novice in the whims of women of quality. I know well enough how to behave with Abigails and actresses; these you accost with a familiar air, and come to the point without ceremony; but we must go another way to work with ladies of fashion. The gallant, I imagine, must be polite, complaisant, tender, and respectful, though not timorous: instead of endeavouring to hasten his own happiness, by the violence of his trans-

ports, he ought to lie in wait for the moment of frailty.'

These were my reflections, and this the conduct I proposed to observe with Aurora; representing to myself, that in a little time I should have the pleasure of seeing myself at her feet, and of saying a thousand passionate things to that amiable object. I even recollected all the passages of our theatrical pieces that might be of service to me, and do me honour during our interview; and by a seasonable application of these, I hoped (after the example of some players whom I knew) to pass for a wit, though I could only boast of a memory. Absorbed in these reflections, which amused my impatience more agreeably than the military stories of my master, I heard the clock strike eleven; upon which I plunged again into my reverie, sometimes walking, and sometimes sitting in an arbour at the further end of the garden. The long-expected hour of twelve at last struck; and in a few minutes Ortiz, as punctual, though less impatient than I, appeared. 'Signior Gil Blas,' said she, accosting me, 'how long have you been here?' I replied, 'Two hours.'—'In good sooth,' said she, laughing, 'you are very exact; it is a pleasure to make an assignation with you. True, indeed,' continued she, with a serious air, 'you cannot pay too dear for the happy tidings I have to tell you. My mistress wants to have some private conversation with you. I will say no more. The rest is a secret you must learn from her own mouth. Follow me, and I will conduct you into her own apartment.' So saying, the duenna took me by the hand, and led me in a mysterious manner

through a little door, of which she had the key, into the chamber of her mistress.

CHAPTER II.

The reception that Gil Blas met with from Aurora, and the conversation that passed between them.

I SALUTED Aurora, whom I found in dishabille, in the most respectful manner, and with the best grace I could put on; and she received me with a smiling air, forced me to sit down by her, and bade her ambassadress retire into another room. After this prelude, with which I was not ill pleased, she addressed herself to me in these words: 'Gil Blas, you must have perceived that I look upon you in a favourable light, and distinguish you from the rest of my father's servants; and even though you may not have observed, by my looks, that I have a regard for you, the step I have taken this night will leave you no room to doubt it.'

I gave her no time to proceed, but believing that I ought, as a polite gentleman, to spare her modesty the pain of a more formal explanation, I started up in a transport, and throwing myself at her feet, like a stage hero, who falls on his knees before his princess, cried, in a theatrical tone, 'Ah, madam! can it be possible that Gil Blas hitherto the foot-ball of fortune, and outcast of nature, is so happy as to have inspired you with sentiments——' 'Don't speak so loud,' said my mistress, laughing, 'you will awaken my

women who are asleep in the next room. Get up, take your seat again, and hear me to the end, without interrupting me. Yes, Gil Blas,' continued she, resuming her gravity, 'I am your well-wisher; and as a proof of my esteem, will impart to you a secret, on which the repose of my life depends: I am in love with a young gentleman of beauty, fortune, and illustrious birth; his name is Don Lewis Pacheco; and although I have seen him several times in the Prado, and at public shows, I have never spoke to him, am even ignorant of his character, and don't know but he may be a person of bad morals. This is what I want to be informed of; and having occasion for a man to inquire carefully about his reputation, and bring me a faithful account of it, I make choice of you, and believe I run no risk by intrusting you with this commission, in which, I hope, you will acquit yourself with so much discretion and address, that I shall never repent of having made you my confidant.'

Here my mistress left off speaking, in order to know what answer I would make; and I, though at first disconcerted at being so disagreeably undeceived, quickly recollected myself, and surmounting the shame which is always the concomitant of unsuccessful rashness, expressed so much zeal for the lady's interests, and devoted myself with so much ardour to her service, that, though she might still continue to think that I had foolishly flattered myself with having made an impression on her heart, she saw very well that I knew how to make amends for my folly. I asked but two days to bring her an account of Don Lewis; after which, Dame Ortiz being called in by her mistress, conducted me back into the

garden, and left me there, after having said, "Good night, Gil Blas; I know your punctuality so well, that I need not recommend it to you to be early at the next assignation.'

I returned to my chamber, not without some vexation to find my expectations balked: nevertheless, I was wise enough to reflect, that it became me better to be the confidant than the lover of my mistress. I considered, too, that this might turn out to my advantage, as the messengers of love are usually well paid for their trouble; and I went to bed, in a full resolution to perform what Aurora desired. With this view, I went abroad next day, and found no difficulty in learning the place of abode of such a noted cavalier as Don Lewis. I inquired into his character in the neighbourhood; but those to whom I applied could not fully satisfy my curiosity. This made me repeat my inquiries the following day, when I was more successful. Meeting by accident, in the street, a young man of my acquaintance, we stopt to chat a little; and, that very instant, a friend of his happening to pass, made up to us, and told his comrade, that he had been just turned away by Don Pacheco, the father of Don Lewis, on suspicion of having drank a cask of wine belonging to his master. I did not lose such a fair opportunity of being informed of every thing I wanted to know, and succeeded so well by the questions I asked, that I went home very well satisfied that I was able to keep my word with my mistress. I was to see her again the next night, at the same hour, and in the same manner as at first: but I did not suffer so much disquiet that night; and, far from bearing the conversation of my old master with im

patience, I introduced the subject of his campaigns, waited for twelve with the utmost tranquillity, and it was not until I had heard the hour repeated by several clocks, that I went down into the garden, void of essence and perfumes, resolved, for the future, to retrench that extravagance.

I found the most trusty duenna at the rendezvous, and she upbraided me in a satirical manner, for having abated in my diligence. I made no answer, but let her conduct me into the apartment of Aurora; who, as soon as I appeared, asked if I had got good intelligence of Don Lewis. 'Yes, madam,' said I; 'and you shall hear it in two words. In the first place, I must tell you, that he will set out very soon on his return to Salamanca, in order to finish his studies. He is a young cavalier of honour and probity; and, being a gentleman and Castilian, his courage is not to be doubted; he has, besides, a great deal of wit, and his behaviour is very agreeable: but that which perhaps you will least like in him, is a disposition too much a-kin to that of most of our young noblemen, extremely rakish. You must know that, young as he is, he has already had two actresses in his keeping.' 'Is it possible!' cried Aurora; 'Heavens! what morals! But are you certain, Gil Blas, that he leads such a licentious life?'—'Oh! I don't at all doubt it, madam,' I replied: 'I was informed by a valet, who was turned out of his service this morning; and servants are commonly very sincere, when they talk of their master's faults. Besides, he keeps company with Don Alexo Segiar, Don Antonio Centelles, and Don Fernando de Gamboa; and that, alone, is a sufficient demonstration of his libertin-

ism.' 'Enough, Gil Blas,' said my mistress, sighing; 'on the credit of your report, I will combat my unworthy passion, which, though it has already taken deep root in my heart, I don't despair to overcome. Go,' added she, giving me a little purse well replenished, 'there's something for your trouble: beware of disclosing my secret, and remember that I depend upon your silence.'

I assured my mistress, that she might make herself perfectly easy on that score, for I was the Harpocrates* of trusty valets. After this assurance I withdrew, very impatient to know the contents of the purse, in which I found twenty pistoles. This made me believe, that Aurora would have certainly given me more, had I brought her agreeable tidings, since she paid me so handsomely for such a mortifying piece of news; and I repented that I had not imitated the lawyers, who sometimes put a gloss upon the truth in the practice of their profession. I was sorry for having nipt in the bud an intrigue, the consequence of which might have been very advantageous to me: however, I had the consolation to see myself indemnified for my unseasonable expense in essences and perfumes.

* Harpocrates was the god of Silence.

CHAPTER III.

The great change that happened in the family of Don Vincent, and the strange resolution with which love inspired the fair Aurora.

Soon after this adventure, Signior Don Vincent happened to fall sick; and though he had not been in such an advanced age, the symptoms of his disease were so violent, that we had reason to fear a fatal issue. When he was first seized, two of the most famous physicians of Madrid were sent for: one of them was called Doctor Andros, and the other Doctor Oquetos; who having examined the patient with great attention, were of opinion that the humours of his body were in a state of fermentation: but in nothing else could they agree. 'We must make haste,' said Andros, 'and purge off the humours, though they be crude, while they continue in this violent agitation of flux and reflux, lest they settle upon some noble part.' Oquetos, on the contrary, maintained, that they ought to wait for the concoction of the humours, before they should employ a cathartic. 'But your method,' resumed the first, 'is directly opposite to that of the prince of medicine: Hippocrates orders cathartics in the first days of the most ardent fever, and says, in express terms, that we must be ready to purge, when the humours are in the orgasm; that is to say, in a state of fermentation.' 'O! there you are mistaken,' replied Oquetos; 'Hip-

pocrates, by the word orgasm, does not understand the fermentation, but the concoction of the humours.'

Upon this, the doctors grew passionate; one repeated the Greek text, and quoted all those authors who had explained it in his way; the other, relying on a Latin translation, pronounced it in a tone still more vociferous. Which of them was in the right? Don Vincent was not the man to decide that question; but seeing himself obliged to choose, bestowed his confidence on him who had despatched the greatest number of patients; I mean the eldest of the two. Andros, therefore, who was the younger, withdrew; not without darting some strokes of raillery at his senior, on his intepretation of the word orgasm. Oquetos, who remained triumphant, being a man of Dr. Sangrado's principle, began, by ordering his patient to be copiously blooded, deferring his cathartic until the humours should be concocted; but Death, who, without doubt, was afraid the purgation, so sagely delayed, would deprive him of his prey, prevented the concoction, and carried my master off. Such was the end of Signior Don Vincent; who lost his life, because his physician did not understand Greek!

Aurora having celebrated her father's funeral in a manner suitable to his birth, took possession of his estate; and being now mistress of herself, dismissed some of her domestics, with rewards proportioned to their several services; and, in a little time, retired to a castle, which she had on the banks of the Tagus, between Sacedon and Buendia. I was not only one of those whom she retained, and carried to the country with her,

but also had the good fortune to become a necessary person. Notwithstanding the faithful report I had made to her of Don Lewis, she was still in love with that cavalier; or rather, finding herself unable to conquer her passion, she had abandoned herself entirely to it; and being no longer under a necessity of taking precautions to speak with me in private, 'Gil Blas,' said she, sighing, 'I cannot forget Don Lewis; in spite of all my efforts to banish him from my thoughts, he is still present in my imagination; not such as thou hast painted him, plunged in all sorts of debauchery; but such as I would have him to be, tender, amorous, and constant.' So saying, she began to melt, and could not help shedding some tears, which affected me so much, that I could scarce refrain from weeping also; and I could not make my court to her more effectually, than by sympathizing with her sorrow. 'I see thou hast a very tender disposition, my friend,' added she, after having dried her fair eyes; 'and I am so well satisfied with thy zeal that thou mayest depend upon being well recompensed. Dear Gil Blas, I have more occasion now than ever for thy assistance. I will disclose to thee a design which at present engrosses me, and which thou wilt, no doubt, pronounce very capricious. Know, that I intend to set out immediately for Salamanca, where I will disguise myself like a cavalier, and, under the name of Don Felix, get acquainted with Pacheco, whose confidence and friendship I will endeavour to acquire: I will often speak to him of Aurora de Guzman, and call myself her cousin; by which means he will, perhaps, express a desire to see her; and then my expectation will be answered.

We will have two different lodgings at Salamanca, in one of which I will pass for Don Felix, in the other for Aurora; and presenting myself to the eyes of Don Lewis, sometimes metamorphosed into a man, and sometimes in my own dress, I flatter myself that I shall, by degrees, accomplish my purpose. I grant,' added she, 'that this is an extravagant scheme; but I am hurried away by my passion, and the innocence of my intention makes me insensible of the risk I must run.'

I was very much of Aurora's opinion, with regard to the nature of her design: nevertheless, how imprudent soever I judged it, I took care not to act the pedagogue; but, on the contrary, began to gild the pill, and undertook to prove, that this mad project was no more than an agreeable frolic, that could have no bad consequence. My mistress was pleased with this construction; for lovers are charmed with flattery, even in their most extravagant fancies. We now, therefore, looked upon this rash enterprise in no other light than that of a comedy, the skilful representation of which it was our business to concert. Having chosen our actors from the servants of the family, the parts were distributed without the least quarrel or disturbance, because we were not players by profession. It was resolved that Dame Ortiz should act the part of Aurora's aunt, under the name of Donna Ximena de Guzman, attended by a valet and waiting woman; and that Aurora, dressed like a cavalier, should entertain me as valet de chambre, together with one of her own maids in the disguise of a page, to be always about her person. The characters being thus regulated, we returned to

Madrid, where we understood Don Lewis still was, but that it would not be long before he would set out for Salamanca; upon which we ordered the necessary dresses to be made with all diligence; and when they were finished, my mistress caused them to be conveniently packed up, until we should find a proper time and place for putting them on. Then leaving the care of her house to the steward, she set out in a coach drawn by four mules, and took the road to the kingdom of Leon, with all those of her servants who had parts to act in her performance.

We had already crossed Old Castile, when the axle-tree of the coach gave way, between Avila and Villaflor, about three or four thousand paces from a castle, which we perceived at the foot of a mountain. As night approached, we were not a little embarrassed; when a peasant, passing by accident, rid us of our anxiety, by telling us, that the castle which we saw belonged to Donna Elvira, widow of Don Pedro de Pinares; a lady, whose character he extolled so much, that my mistress sent me to the castle, to beg a lodging for one night. Elvira did not belie the countryman's report, but received me with great affability, and favoured Aurora's compliment with such an answer as she desired. We repaired immediately to the castle, whither our coach was dragged slowly by the mules, and at the gate met Don Pedro's widow, who came out to receive my mistress. I will pass over in silence the civil things that were said on both sides on this occasion; and only observe, that Elvira was a lady pretty much advanced in years, but very polite, and understood how to perform the duties of hospitality as well as any woman in the world.

She conducted Aurora into a sumptuous apartment, where, leaving her to repose a few moments, she came and employed her attention on the most minute things that concerned us. Afterwards, when supper was ready, she ordered the cloth to be laid in Aurora's chamber, where they sat down together at table. Don Pedro's widow was not one of those people who cloud the honour of their entertainments with a pensive and discontented air: she was of a gay disposition, and supported the conversation in an agreeable manner, expressing herself with great dignity and elegance. I admired her understanding, and the delicate turn of her thoughts, which seemed to charm Aurora as well as me. They conceived a friendship for one another, and promised to maintain a correspondence by letters. Our coach could not be refitted till the following day, and as we should run some risk by setting out late, it was determined that we should stay at the castle another night. We, in our turn, were served with a profusion of victuals, and our beds were no less comfortable than our meal.

Next day, my mistress found new charms in the conversation of Elvira, with whom she dined in a large hall, adorned with several pictures; one of which was remarkable for the beauty and wonderful expression of the figures, though it presented a very tragical scene to the view. A dead cavalier appeared lying on his back, and drowned in his own blood; but seemed still to retain a menacing air even in death. Near him lay a young lady in another attitude, stretched also upon the ground; a sword was seen plunged in her bosom, and she breathed her last sighs, fixing her dying eyes upon a young man, who

seemed mortally grieved at the loss of her. The painter had likewise drawn another figure, which did not escape my attention: this was, an old man of a good mien, who, strongly affected with the objects that struck his view, discovered as much sensibility as the youth. One would have thought that each of them felt the same pangs, at sight of these doleful images, but that each received the impression in a different manner. The old man seemed overwhelmed with the profound sorrow in which he was plunged; but there was fury mixed with the affliction of the youth. The painter had expressed the whole with such strength, that we could scarce withdraw our eyes from the performance. My mistress having asked what story the picture represented; 'Madam,' said Elvira, 'it is a faithful representation of the misfortunes of my family.' This answer excited the curiosity of Aurora, who expressed such an inclination to know more, that Don Pedro's widow could not dispense with promising her the satisfaction she desired. This promise, which was made before Ortiz, her two companions, and me, detained us all four in the hall after dinner. My mistress would have sent us away, but Elvira perceiving that we longed fervently to hear the explanation of the picture, had the goodness to bid us stay; saying, that the story which she was going to relate, was none of those that required secresy; and immediately began in these words.

CHAPTER IV.

*The Baleful Marriage: a Novel.**

'Roger, King of Sicily, had a brother and a sister: the first, called Mainfroy, revolted against him, and lighted up a dangerous and bloody war in the kingdom; but had the misfortune to lose two battles, and fall into the hands of the king, who contented himself with punishing his rebellion, by depriving him of his liberty. This clemency served only to make Roger pass for a barbarian, in the opinion of one part of his subjects, who said he had only saved his brother's life, in order to exercise over him a slow and inhuman revenge. But all the rest, with better foundation, imputed the harsh treatment that Mainfroy suffered in prison, to his sister Mathilda alone: for she had, in effect, always hated the prince, and did not cease persecuting him as long as he lived; but she died soon after him, and her death was looked upon as a just punishment of her unnatural disposition.

'Mainfroy having left two sons, as yet in their infancy, Roger wished to get rid of them; fearing that, when they should arrive at a more advanced age, the desire of revenging their father would induce them to revive a faction which was not so much quelled, but that it might occasion new troubles in the state. He imparted his design

* This novel is founded in truth, and is the groundwork of Thompson's tragedy of Tancred and Sigismunda.

to the senator Leontio Siffredi, his minister, who, to divert him from putting it in execution, undertook the education of Prince Henriquez, the eldest; and advised him to commit the youngest, who was called Don Pedro, to the care of the Constable of Sicily. Roger, persuaded that his nephews would be brought up by these men in that submission and duty which they owed to him, left the princes to their conduct; and took upon himself the care of his niece Constantia, who was of the same age with Henriquez, and only daughter of the Princess Mathilda; he furnished her with women and masters, and spared nothing in her education.

'Leontio Siffredi had a castle two short leagues from Palermo, at a place called Belmont; and there that minister employed himself in rendering Henriquez worthy of mounting one day the throne of Sicily. He soon observed in that prince such amiable qualities, that he applied himself to the cultivation of them as closely as if he had no children of his own. He was blessed, however, with two daughters; the eldest of whom, called Blanche, younger by a year than the prince, was adorned with the most perfect beauty: the other, named Porcia, whose birth occasioned her mother's death, was still in the cradle. Blanche and Prince Henriquez, as soon as they were capable of love, entertained a mutual passion; though they had not the liberty of conversing in private. The prince, however, did not fail to find opportunities sometimes, and knew so well how to profit by these precious moments, that he engaged the daughter of Siffredi to allow him to execute a project he had formed. Just about this time, it happened

that Leontio was obliged, by the king's orders, to make a journey into one of the most remote provinces of the island; and during his absence, Henriquez caused an opening to be made in the wall of his apartment, that was contiguous to the chamber of Blanche; supplying it with a sliding partition of wood, that opened and shut, without being perceived; because it was so closely joined to the ceiling, that the eye could not discover the artifice. A skilful architect, whom the prince had made his friend, performed the work with equal diligence and secrecy.

'Through this passage the amorous Henriquez introduced himself sometimes into the chamber of his mistress; but he did not abuse her favour: for though she was imprudent enough to allow him a private entrance into her apartment, she did not condescend so far, until he had assured her, that he would never ask any thing that innocence could not grant. One night he found her very uneasy, because she had heard that Roger was very ill, and had sent for Siffredi, as high chancellor of the kingdom, in order to entrust him with his last will. She represented to herself already, her dear Henriquez on the throne, and being afraid of losing him in that high station, was under the utmost anxiety; and the tears stood in her eyes when he appeared. "Heavens! you weep, madam; what must I think of that sorrow with which I see you overwhelmed?"—"Sir," replied Blanche, "I cannot conceal my alarms: the king, your uncle, will soon cease to live, and you will succeed him. When I, therefore, foresee how far your new greatness will remove you from me, I own I cannot be unconcerned. A monarch seldom beholds things

with a lover's eye, and that which was his utmost ambition while he was a subject, affects him but slightly when he is on the throne. Whether it be an unhappy presage, or reason alone, that inspires me, I feel my soul agitated with emotions that all my confidence in your goodness cannot assuage; and though I dare not doubt your generosity, I cannot help distrusting my own destiny." "Adorable Blanche!" replied the prince, "your fears are obliging, and justify my attachment to your charms; but the excess of your doubts injures my love, and (if I may be allowed to say so) the esteem which you owe me. No! think not my destiny and yours can ever be separated: believe, rather, that you will always be the object of my happiness and joy. Lay aside your fear, therefore, and let it not disturb such endearing moments." "Ah, sir!" answered the daughter of Leontio, "as soon as you are crowned, your subjects, perhaps, will demand for your queen a princess descended from a long race of kings, whose splendid alliance may add new realms to yours; and, perhaps, alas! you will answer their expectation, even at the expense of your inclination." "Ha! why," replied Henriquez, with some warmth, "why are you thus prone to torment yourself, by raising such an afflicting image of what will never happen? Should Heaven dispose of the king, my uncle, and make me master of Sicily, I swear that I will espouse you in Palermo, in presence of all my court; and I invoke all that is sacred to confirm my oath!"

'Siffredi's daughter was cheered by the protestations of Henriquez, and the rest of their conversation turned on the king's distemper-

on which occasion, Henriquez discovered the goodness of his heart, in lamenting his uncle's fate, with which he had no great occasion to be affected: the force of blood making him regret a prince, by whose death he should acquire a crown. Blanche, as yet, did not know all the misfortunes that threatened her. The Constable of Sicily, who had met her coming out of her father's apartment, one day when he was at the castle of Belmont, on some important affairs, was captivated with her beauty, and next day demanded her in marriage of Siffredi, who consented to the match; but Roger's distemper intervening, the nuptials were deferred, and Blanche knew nothing of the matter.

'One morning, just as Henriquez had done dressing, he was surprised to see Leontio, followed by Blanche, come into his apartment. "Sir," said that minister to him, "the news I bring are afflicting, but the consolation with which they are attended, ought to moderate your grief. The king your uncle is dead, after having left you heir to his sceptre; and Sicily is subject to your sway. The grandees of the realm, who attend your orders at Palermo, have commissioned me to receive them from your mouth: and I am come, sir, with my daughter, the first of your new subjects, to offer you our early and sincere homage." The prince, who knew very well that Roger had laboured two months under a disease that gradually consumed him, was not much surprised at this piece of news; nevertheless, struck with the sudden change of his condition, he felt a thousand confused emotions rise within his breast; and having mused some time, broke silence, by

addressing himself to Leontio in these words: "Sage Siffredi, I shall always look upon you as my father, glory in regulating my conduct by your counsel, and you shall be as much a king in Sicily as I am." So saying, he advanced to a table on which there was a standish, and taking a sheet of paper, wrote his name at the bottom of the page. "What are you about to do, sir?" said Siffredi to him. "I am going to manifest my gratitude and esteem," answered Henriquez, presenting the sheet to Blanche, and saying, "Receive, madam, this pledge of my faith, and of the empire over my inclinations, which I now yield to you." Blanche took it, blushing, and made this answer to the prince: "I receive with respect the favours of my king; but I depend upon a father; and I hope your majesty will not take it ill, that I deposit this paper in his hands, to be used as his prudence shall direct him."

She accordingly gave the subscription of Henriquez to her father, who then observed what till that moment had escaped his penetration: he discerned the prince's sentiments, and said to him, "Your majesty shall have no cause to reproach me; for I will not abuse your confidence." "My dear Leontio," cried Henriquez, interrupting him, "don't imagine you can abuse it. Whatever use you shall make of the paper, I will approve of your determination. But go," added he, "return to Palermo, order the preparations to be made for my coronation, and tell my subjects, that I will follow you immediately thither, in order to receive their oaths of allegiance, and assure them of my affection." The minister obeyed his new

master's order; and, with his daughter, set out for Palermo.

'A few hours after their departure, the prince took the same road, more engrossed by his love, than by the high rank to which he was raised. As soon as he arrived in the city, he was saluted with innumerable shouts of joy; and, amidst the acclamations of his people, entered the palace, where every thing was already prepared for the ceremony, and where he found the Princess Constantia in deep mourning, and to all appearance very much affected with Roger's death. As they owed one another a mutual compliment of condolence on the event, they both acquitted themselves very handsomely; but it was more cold on the side of Henriquez, than on that of Constance; who, in spite of the enmity subsisting between their families, could not hate the prince. He placed himself on the throne, and the princess sat on his right hand, in an elbow chair not quite so high. The grandees of the kingdom took their places, each according to his rank: the ceremony began, and Leontio, as high chancellor of the state, and keeper of the late king's will, opened and read it with an audible voice. This deed contained, in substance, That Roger seeing himself without issue, named the eldest son of Mainfroy for his successor, on condition that he should espouse the Princess Constance; which if he refused to perform, he should forfeit the crown of Sicily to the Infant Don Pedro, his brother, who should enjoy it on the same terms.

'Henriquez was confounded at these words; the restriction gave him incredible pain, which

became still more violent, when Leontio, after having read the will, pronounced to the whole assembly: "My lords, having reported the last intentions of the late king to our new monarch, that generous prince consents to honour his cousin, the Princess Constance, with his hand." At these words, Henriquez interrupted the chancellor, saying, "Leontio, remember the writing which Blanche—" "Sir," said Siffredi, with precipitation, before the prince had time to explain himself, "here it is. The grandees of the realm," added he, showing the paper to the assembly, "will here see by your majesty's august signature, the esteem you have for the princess, and the deference you pay to the last will of the deceased king your uncle." Having spoke these words, he read the deed with which he himself had filled the paper, containing the most solemn engagement to marry Constance, conformable to the intention of Roger. The hall rung with repeated shouts of all present, who cried, "Long live our magnanimous King Henriquez!" for as nobody was ignorant of the aversion which that prince had always manifested for the princess, it was feared, not without reason, that he would revolt against the condition of the will, and by these means raise commotions in the kingdom. But the reading of this paper entirely composed the minds of the nobles and people, and excited those general acclamations, which in secret tortured the monarch's soul.

'Constance, who, both on account of her own glory, and her passion for Henriquez, enjoyed the public satisfaction more than any body, chose this time to assure him of her gratitude. But the prince, in vain endeavouring to constrain

himself, received her compliments with great affliction; and was, indeed, in such disorder, that he could not even perform what decency required. At last, yielding to the violence of his passion, he approached Siffredi, whom the duty of his office obliged to be pretty near his person, and with a low voice said, "What have you done, Leontio? The subscription, which I put into your daughter's hands, was not intended for this use. You have betrayed—" "Sir," said Siffredi, interrupting him in a resolute tone, "consider your own glory; if you refuse to follow the will of the king your uncle, you lose the crown of Sicily." He had no sooner spoke in this manner, than he removed at a greater distance from the king, that he might not have an opportunity to reply. Henriquez remained in the utmost perplexity, and felt himself agitated by contrary emotions. He was incensed against Siffredi; he could not resolve to abandon Blanche; but, distracted between her and the interest of his glory, it was some time before he could come to any resolution. However, he was determined at last, and thought he had fallen upon a method to preserve the daughter of Siffredi, without renouncing the throne. He feigned submission to the will of Roger, and purposed, while a dispensation for his marriage with his cousin should be soliciting at Rome, to gain the nobles of the realm by his bounty, and establish his power so well, that he should not be obliged to fulfil its conditions.

'As soon as he had formed this design, he became more tranquil; and turning to Constance, confirmed to her what the high-chancellor had read before the whole assembly. But in the very

moment when he betrayed himself so far as to plight his troth to her, Blanche arrived in the council-hall. She came thither by her father's command, to pay her respects to the princess, and her ears were struck with the words of Henriquez, at her first entrance. Besides, Leontio, being desirous that she should have no cause to doubt of her misfortune, said, while he presented her to Constance, "Daughter, do homage to your queen, and wish her all the sweets of a flourishing reign and happy marriage." This terrible stroke overwhelmed the unfortunate Blanche: in vain she endeavoured to conceal her grief; she blushed, and grew pale, alternately, and shook through every limb. Nevertheless, the princess had not the least suspicion of the cause, but attributed the disorder in which she paid her compliment, to the perplexity of a young creature bred up in solitude, and altogether unaccustomed to the court. It was quite otherwise with the young king: the sight of Blanche abashed him; and the despair he observed in her eyes, transported him quite beside himself. He did not doubt that, judging by appearances, she believed him unfaithful. He would have been less uneasy could he have spoken to her: but how could he find an opportunity, when all Sicily, as one may say, had its eyes upon him? Besides, the cruel Siffredi deprived him of that hope: for, reading the thoughts of these two lovers in their looks, and willing to prevent the mischief which the violence of their passion might create in the state, that minister, in an artful manner, carried his daughter out of the assembly, and set out with her on his return to Belmont; resolved, for more

reasons than one, to have her married as soon as possible

'They were no sooner arrived, than he made her acquainted with all the horrors of her fate, by declaring that he had promised her in marriage to the Constable. "Just heaven!" cried she, in a transport of grief, which her father's presence could not repress; "for what direful punishment is the unfortunate Blanche reserved!" Her despair was even so violent, as to suspend all the faculties of her soul. She was seized with a universal chillness, and becoming clav-cold and wan, swooned away in the arms of her father. He was affected with her condition; but, though he shared her affliction with all the tenderness of a parent, his first resolution still remained unshaken. Blanche, at length, recovered her spirits, more through the exquisite sensation of her grief, than through the water which Siffredi sprinkled on her face; which perceiving, while she opened her languishing eyes, "Sir," said she, with a feeble voice, "I am ashamed that you have seen my weakness; but death, which must soon end my torments, will in a little time rid you of an unhappy daughter, who has dared to dispose of her heart without your consent." "No, my dear Blanche," replied Leontio; "live, and let virtue resume its empire in your breast. The Constable's passion does you honour; he is the most considerable match in the kingdom." "I esteem his person and his merit," said Blanche, interrupting him, "but, sir, the king hath made me hope—" "Daughter," said Siffredi, cutting her short in his turn, "I know all that you can say on that subject. I am not ignorant of your tenderness for the prince,

which at another conjuncture I should not disapprove. You should even see me eager to ensure you of the hand of Henriquez, if the interest of his glory, and that of the state, did not oblige him to bestow it on Constance. It is on that condition only, that the late king designed him for his successor; and would you have him prefer you to the crown of Sicily? Believe me, I sympathize with you in the cruel stroke you suffer; but since we cannot withstand the decrees of Destiny, make one generous effort. Your glory is concerned, in concealing from the kingdom the vain hope with which you flattered yourself. Your sensibility for the king may raise reports to your disadvantage; and the only means of preventing them, will be to marry the Constable. In short, Blanche, this is no time to deliberate. The king yields you for a throne, and marries Constance. The Constable has my promise, which I beg you will perform; and if I must use my authority to bring you to this resolution, I order you to comply."

'So saying, he left her to reflect upon what she had heard, hoping, that after having maturely considered the arguments he had used to support her virtue against her inclination, she would resolve, of herself, to give her hand to the Constable. In this he was not mistaken. But, what pangs did it cost the melancholy Blanche, before she came to that determination! She was in a condition, which, of all others, was most worthy of compassion! Grief for seeing her presages of the infidelity of Henriquez changed into certainty, and for being constrained, in losing him, to give herself away to another, whom she could not love, created in her

such violent transports of affliction, that every moment was attended with new torture. "If my misfortune is certain," cried she, "how can I resist it without dying? Cruel destiny! why was I fed with the most delicious hope, when I was doomed to such an abyss of misery! And thou, perfidious lover! how durst thou betroth thyself to another, after thou hadst promised eternal fidelity to me? hast thou so soon forgot the faith wich thou hadst sworn? As a punishment for having so cruelly deceived me, may heaven make the nuptial bed, which thou art going to stain with perjury, not a scene of pleasure, but remorse! May the caresses of Constance convey poison to thy faithless heart! and may thy marriage be as baleful as mine! Yes, traitor! I will espouse the Constable, whom I cannot love, to revenge me upon myself, and punish me, for having made so indiscreet a choice of the object of my love! Since my religion forbids me to make any attempt upon my life, the days I have to live shall be nothing else than an unhappy series of trouble and disquiet. If thou still preservest any tenderness for me, thou wilt be mortified at seeing me throw myself into the arms of another; and if thou hast entirely forgot me, Sicily, at least, may boast of having produced a woman, who punished herself for having too simply disposed of her heart!"

'In such a situation did this unhappy victim of love and duty pass the night that preceded her marriage with the Constable; and Siffredi, finding her next day ready to comply with his desire, made haste to take the advantage of that favourable disposition. He sent for the Constable to Belmont that same day, and married him

privately to his daughter, in the chapel of the castle. It was not enough to renounce a crown, to lose for ever a person whom she loved, and bestow herself upon the object of her hatred; but she was also obliged to dissemble her sentiments before a husband who was inflamed with the most ardent passion for her, and naturally of a jealous disposition. Her spouse, charmed with the possession of what he held most dear, was continually in her company, and did not even allow her the sad consolation of bewailing her misfortune in secret. When night approached, the daughter of Leontio felt her affliction redouble: but what were her pangs, when her women, after having undressed, left her alone with the Constable! He asked, in a respectful manner, the cause of that sorrow with which she seemed to be depressed; and Blanche, perplexed by the question, feigned herself indisposed. This deceived her husband at first, but he did not long continue in his mistake: for, as he was really concerned at the condition in which he saw her, and pressed her to go to bed, his entreaties, which she misinterpreted, presented such a cruel image to her imagination, that, being unable to contain herself any longer, she gave free vent to her sighs and tears. What a sight was this for a man, who believed himself at the very summit of his happiness! He no longer doubted that the affliction of his wife portended something sinister to his love. Nevertheless, though the knowledge of it threw him into a situation almost as deplorable as that of Blanche, he had such a command of himself, that he concealed his suspicions. He redoubled his entreaties, and continued to press his spouse

to go to rest; assuring her, that he would not interrupt the repose which she seemed so much to want. He even offered to call her women, if she thought their assistance could alleviate her indisposition.' Blanche, encouraged by this promise, told him, that her present weakness only required a little sleep. He pretended to believe her; and going to bed together, they passed a night very different from those which Cupid and Hymen bestow on two lovers inspired by mutual passion.

'While Siffredi's daughter indulged her sorrow, the Constable endeavoured, within himself, to divine the cause that rendered his marriage so unhappy. He concluded there was a rival in the case; but was bewildered in his own imagination, when he attempted to discover who that rival was; and the sole result of his conjectures was, that he was the most unhappy of all mankind. He had already spent two-thirds of the night in these agitations, when his ears were struck with a hollow noise, and he was not a little surprised to hear somebody walking softly in the chamber. He believed himself mistaken; for he remembered that he himself had locked the door, after Blanche's women were gone, and drew back the curtain to discover, by the evidence of his eyes, the cause of the noise which he heard: but the light, which had been left in the chimney, was extinguished; and in a little time he heard the name of Blanche repeated several times, in a soft and languishing tone. Then his jealous suspicions were inflamed to fury, and his honour, alarmed, obliging him to rise, in order to prevent an affront, or take vengeance for it, he seized his sword, and moved

towards that side whence the voice seemed to come. Feeling a naked sword opposed to his own, he advanced, the other retired; he pursued, and the other vanished from his pursuit. In vain did he search for him, who seemed to fly, through all the corners of the room, as much as the darkness would allow; he could not find him; he stopped, listened, and heard nothing. All seemed to be enchantment! He went to the door, which he imagined had favoured the flight of the secret enemy of his honour, but he found it fast locked as before. Not being able to comprehend any thing of this adventure, he called those of his people who were nearest, and as he opened the door for that purpose, stood in the passage, and kept himself on his guard, that the person whom he sought might not escape.

'Some servants hearing his repeated cries, came running with lights; upon which, he took a candle and made a new search in the chamber, sword in hand; but found nobody, nor the least mark of any person's having been there. He did not even perceive the private door, nor the opening, through which there was a passage. He could not, however, blindfold himself, with regard to the circumstances of his misfortune, but remained in a strange confusion of thoughts. Should he have recourse to Blanche, she was too much concerned in the truth, for him to expect an explanation from her. He therefore resolved to go and open his heart to Leontio, after having dismissed his servants; telling them, that he thought he had heard a noise in his chamber, but was mistaken. He met his father-in-law coming out of his apartment, at the disturbance he had heard, and recounted to him what had

happened, with all the marks of extreme agitation and profound grief.

'Siffredi was surprised at the adventure, which, though it did not seem natural, he nevertheless believed; and thinking that the king's love was capable of any thing, was very much afflicted with that consideration. But far from flattering the jealous suspicions of his son-in-law, he represented to him, with an air of assurance, that the voice which he thought he heard, and the sword that was opposed to his, could be no other than phantoms of an imagination, misled by jealousy; for it was impossible that any body could have gone into his daughter's chamber; that with regard to the melancholy which he had observed in his wife, it might be occasioned by some indisposition; that honour ought not to be answerable for the vicissitudes of temper; that the change of condition in a girl used to live in solitude, who sees herself on a sudden delivered to a man, whom she has not had time to know and to love, might be the cause of those tears, sighs, and that sharp affliction of which she complained; that love was not to be kindled in maidens of a noble birth, by any other means than time and assiduity; for which reasons he exhorted him to calm his disquiet, redouble his tenderness and care, in order to dispose Blanche to become more sensible of his merit; and entreated him to return to his chamber, being persuaded that his uneasiness and distrust were injuries done to the virtue of his wife.

'The Constable made no answer to the remonstrances of his father-in-law: whether he really began to think that he might have been imposed upon by the disorder of his mind, or judged it a

wiser course to dissemble, than to undertake, in vain, to convince the old man of an event so void of all probability, he returned to his apartment, lay down by his wife, and tried to obtain, by sleep, some respite from his disquiet. Blanche, on her side, was no less uneasy than he; she had but too well heard that which alarmed her husband, and could not consider as an illusion, an adventure, the secret and motives of which she knew. Surprised that Henriquez should seek to introduce himself into her apartment, after having so solemnly pledged his faith to Constance, instead of approving or feeling the least glimpse of joy at this step, she looked upon it as a new outrage, and her heart was incensed against him.

'While the daughter of Siffredi, prejudiced against the young king, believed him the most unfaithful of men, that unhappy prince, more in love than ever, wished for an interview with Blanche, in order to encourage her against the appearance that condemned him. He would have come sooner to Belmont for that purpose, had he been permitted by the multiplicity of business in which he was necessarily engaged; but he could not steal away from court before that night. He was too well acquainted with all the private corners of a place where he had been educated, to be under any difficulty of getting unseen into Siffredi's castle; and he still kept the key of a private door that belonged to the garden, through which he got into his old apartment, from whence he passed into the chamber of Blanche. You may imagine the astonishment of that prince when he found a man there, and felt a sword opposed to his own. He had well nigh discovered himself, and punished on the spot the auda-

cious wretch, who durst lift his sacrilegious hand against his lawful king; but the respect he owed to Leontio's daughter suspended his resentment: he retired in the same manner he had entered; and, more afflicted than ever, took the road to Palermo; where, arriving some moments before day, he shut himself up in his apartment. But the agitation of his spirits depriving him of his rest, he resolved to return to Belmont; his safety, honour, and, above all, his love, not permitting him to remain longer ignorant of the least circumstance of such a cruel adventure.

'It was no sooner day than he commanded his hunting equipage to be got ready; and, under pretence of taking that diversion, rode far into the forest of Belmont, attended by his sportsmen and some courtiers. He followed the chase some time, the better to conceal his design; and when he saw every one eagerly engaged at the heels of the hounds, he separated himself from them, and all alone took his way to Leontio's castle. He was too well acquainted with the paths of the forest to lose himself; and his impatience not permitting him to spare his horse, he in a little time overrun the distance that separated him from the object of his love. He was just inventing some plausible pretext to procure for himself a private interview with the daughter of Siffredi, when, crossing a small road that led by one of the park-gates, he perceived, hard by, two women sitting, in close conversation, at the root of a tree. As he did not doubt that these persons belonged to the castle, the sight of them raised within him some emotion; but he was much more transported, when the women, turning toward him, at the noise of his horse's feet,

me knew one of them to be his dear Blanche, who had escaped from the castle with Nisa, one of her women, who enjoyed the greatest share of her confidence, to bewail her misfortune at full liberty.

'He flew; he threw himself headlong (if I may use the expression) at her feet; and perceiving in her eyes all the marks of the most profound affliction, was melted at the sight. "Fair Blanche," said he, "suspend the emotions of your grief; appearances, I confess, represent me guilty to your eyes: but when you are made acquainted with the design which I formed in your behalf, that which you now look upon as a crime, will appear to you a proof of my innocence and excess of love." These words, which Henriquez thought capable of moderating, only served to redouble the affliction of Blanche, who would have answered him, had not her voice been choked up with her sighs. The prince, astonished with her disorder, said, "How, madam! can't I then calm your disquiet? By what misfortune have I lost your confidence? I, who hazard my crown, and even my life, to keep myself yours!" It was then that the daughter of Siffredi, making an effort to explain herself, replied, "Sir, your promises are now unseasonable. Nothing henceforth can bind my destiny to yours." "Ah, Blanche!" said Henriquez, interrupting her with warmth, "what cruel words are these I hear! Who dares ravish you from my love? Who dares oppose the fury of a king, who would put all Sicily in flames, rather than suffer you to be torn from his hopes?" "All your powers, sir," answered Siffredi's daughter, in a languishing manner, "cannot remove the

obstacles by which we are separated—I am the Constable's wife!" "The Constable's wife!" cried the prince, staggering backward, and unable to go on. He was confounded and overwhelmed by this unexpected blow: his strength forsook him, and he dropped down at the root of a tree that grew behind him. Pale, trembling, and depressed, he had nothing free but his eyes, which he fixed upon Blanche, in such a manner as gave her to understand how deeply affected he was with the unhappy tidings she had declared. She, on the other hand, looked upon him with an air which convinced him that her emotions were little less different from those he felt; and these two unfortunate lovers preserved, between them, a silence that had something terrible in it. At length, the prince, recollecting himself a little, by an effort of his courage, resumed the discourse, and said to Blanche, with a sigh, "What have you done, madam? Your cruelty has ruined me, and undone yourself!'

'Blanche, piqued at the prince's seeming to upbraid her, when she thought she had much more cause to complain of him, replied, "What, sir! do you add dissimulation to infidelity? Would you have me discredit my own eyes and ears, and believe you innocent, in spite of the evidence of my senses? No, sir! I own myself incapable of such an effort of reason." "Nevertheless, madam," answered the king, "you are imposed upon by these very witnesses which seem so faithful; even they have assisted in betraying you; and that I am innocent and faithful, is no less true, than that you are the Constable's wife." "How, sir!" said she, "did I not hear you confirm to Constance the present of your hand and

heart? Have you not assured the nobles of the kingdom, that you would fulfil the conditions of the late king's will? and has not the princess received the homage of your new subjects, in quality of queen, and spouse of Henriquez? Were my eyes then bewitched? Say, say rather, unfaithful prince! that you did not think Blanche ought to balance in your heart the interest of a throne! and, without stopping to feign a passion which you no longer feel, and perhaps never felt, confess that the crown of Sicily appeared to you more fixed with Constance than with Leontio's daughter! You are in the right, sir: a shining throne was no more my due, than the heart of a prince such as you are. I was too vain, in pretending to either; but you ought not to have indulged me in my error. You know the alarms I felt on account of losing you; a misfortune that then seemed to me almost inevitable. Why did you encourage me with hope? Would to heaven my fears had not been dissipated! I should have accused my fortune, not you; and you would have, at least, preserved my heart, though at the expense of a hand which no other should ever have obtained! It is now no time to justify yourself! I am the Constable's wife; and, that I may spare myself the consequence of a conversation that makes my glory blush, give me leave, sir, without failing in that respect which I owe you, to quit the presence of a prince whom I am no longer at liberty to hear."

'So saying, she left Henriquez with as much haste as her present weak condition would allow. "Stop, madam!" cried he, "and do not drive to despair a prince, who will rather overturn that throne which you upbraid him with having pre-

ferred to you, than fulfil the expectation of his new subjects!" "That sacrifice," said Blanche, "is at present vain. While I am married to the Constable, these generous transports will not avail: since I am then no longer at liberty, it is of small importance to me that you reduce Sicily to ashes, or to whom you give your hand! If I have been weak enough to let my heart be surprised, I shall at least have fortitude enough to stifle its emotions, and let the King of Sicily see, that the Constable's wife is no longer the lover of Prince Henriquez!" When she pronounced these words, being close to the park-gate, she entered it of a sudden with Nisa; and, locking it on the other side, left the prince overwhelmed with sorrow. He could not recover the blow which Blanche had given him, by the account of her marriage. "Unjust Blanche!" cried he, "you have lost all remembrance of our mutual engagement! In spite of our reciprocal vows, we are for ever parted; and the idea which I had cherished of possessing your charms, was no more than a vain illusion! Ah, cruel maid! how dearly did I buy your approbation of my flame!"

'Then the image of his rival's happiness presented itself to his fancy, with all the horrors of jealousy; which took such full possession of his soul for some moments, that he was on the point of sacrificing the Constable, and even Siffredi himself, to his resentment. Reason, however, by degrees allayed the violence of his transports but the impossibility he perceived of banishing from Blanche the impressions she retained of his infidelity, threw him again into despair. He flattered himself with the hopes of effacing them, provided he could converse with her at liberty:

for which purpose, judging it necessary to remove the Constable, he resolved to have him apprehended, as a person suspected of designs against the state. He accordingly charged with this office the captain of his guard; who, repairing to Belmont, secured his person in the twilight, and brought him prisoner to the castle of Palermo.

'This incident filled all Belmont with consternation. Siffredi set out immediately to offer himself to the king, as security for his son-in-law, and to represent the troublesome consequence of such an arrest. The prince, who expected this step of his minister, and who was resolved, at all events, to obtain a free interview with Blanche before the Constable should be released, had expressly ordered, that no person whatever should speak with him till next day. But Leontio, notwithstanding this order, finding means to get access to the king's chamber, presented himself before him, saying, "Sir, if a loyal and respectful subject may be allowed to complain of his master, I am come to complain of you to yourself. What crime has my son-in-law committed? Has your majesty duly reflected on the eternal reproach you have fixed upon my family? and on the consequences of an imprisonment, which may alienate from your service the hearts of those who fill the most important posts of the realm?" "I have certain intelligence," replied the king, "that the Constable carries on a criminal correspondence with the Infant Don Pedro." "Criminal correspondence!" cried Leontio, with surprise; "do not believe it. Your majesty is imposed upon; treason never entered the family of Siffredi; and the Constable's being my son-in

law, is enough to screen him from all suspicion. The Constable is innocent; but other secret views has induced you to arrest him."

"Since you talk to me so freely," replied the king, "I will speak to you in the same manner. You complain of the Constable's being imprisoned. What! have I not more cause to complain of your cruelty? It is you, barbarous Siffredi! who have robbed me of my quiet, and reduced me, by your officious cares, to a condition that makes me envy the lowest of mankind! But do not flatter yourself that I will enter into your schemes: my marriage with Constance is resolved upon in vain!" "How, Sir!" cried Leontio, trembling; "can you refuse to marry the princess, after having flattered her with that hope before your whole people?" "If I deceive their expectation," replied the king, "ascribe it solely to yourself. Why did you lay me under a necessity of promising that which I could not perform? Who compelled you to fill a paper, which I gave your daughter, with the name of Constance? You was not ignorant of my intention; you tyrannized over the heart of Blanche, in making her marry a man whom she did not love. But what right had you to dispose of mine, in favour of a princess whom I hate? Have you forgot that she is the daughter of that cruel Mathilda, who, trampling under her feet all the ties of blood and humanity, made my father breathe his last, under all the rigours of captivity? And shall I espouse her? No, Siffredi! lay aside that hope. Before you see the torch of these direful nuptials lighted, you will see all Sicily in flames, and its ashes quenched in blood!"

"What do I hear!" cried Leontio. "Ah, sir! what a prospect have you shown me! what terrible threats! But I am unseasonably alarmed," added he, in another tone; "you love your subjects too well, to entail upon them such misery. You will not allow yourself to be overcome by love! You will not tarnish your virtues with the weaknesses of ordinary men! If I have bestowed my daughter on the Constable, it was done, sir, with a view of acquiring for your majesty a valiant subject, who can support with his arm, and the troops which are at his disposal, your interest against that of the Prince Don Pedro. I thought, that in attaching him to my family, by such intimate ties—" "Ha! these are the ties," cried the Prince Henriquez; "these are the fatal ties that have undone me! Cruel friend! why did you inflict such a heavy stroke upon me? Did I order you to manage my concerns at the expense of my heart? Why did you not leave me to support my rights myself? Did I want courage to reduce those who should rebel against me, I should have known how to punish the Constable, had he disobeyed me. I know that kings ought not to be tyrants, and that the happiness of their people should be their chief aim; but must they therefore be the slaves of their subjects; and from the moment that heaven chooses them to govern, lose the right that nature grants to all men, of disposing their affections as they please? Ah! if they must not enjoy the privilege of the lowest class of mortals, take back, Siffredi, that sovereign power, which you would confirm at the expense of my repose!"

"You know very well, sir," replied the minister, "that your marriage with the princess was

by the late king, made the condition of your succession to the crown." "And what right," answered Henriquez, "had he to establish that disposition? Had he received such an unworthy law, when he succeeded to his brother King Charles? And how came you to be so weak, as to submit to the unjust condition? For a high-chancellor, methinks you are very ill-informed of our customs. In a word; though I have promised my hand to Constance, it was not a voluntary engagement, therefore I do not intend to keep my word; and if Don Pedro, from my refusal, conceives the hope of mounting my throne, without engaging the people in a quarrel, which might cost too much blood, let the sword decide, in single combat, which of us is most worthy to reign." Leontio, not daring to urge him any further, contented himself with asking, on his knees, the enlargement of his son-in-law, which he obtained. "Go," said the king to him; "return to Belmont, whither the Constable will soon follow you." The minister went away, and got back to Belmont, persuaded that his son-in-law would not be long behind him. But in this he was mistaken: Henriquez resolved to see Blanche that night, and therefore deferred the release of her husband till next day.

'Meanwhile, the Constable was tortured with the most cruel reflections: his imprisonment had opened his eyes, with regard to the true cause of his misfortune; he therefore abandoned himself entirely to his jealousy, and renouncing the allegiance he had hitherto so commendably preserved, breathed nothing but vengeance. As he concluded that the king would not fail of being with Blanche that night, in order to surprise

them together, he begged the governor of the castle of Palermo to let him go out; assuring him that he would return to prison next morning before day. The governor, who was entirely devoted to him, consented to this the more easily, as he knew that Siffredi had already obtained his liberty, and even furnished him with a horse to carry him to Belmont; where the Constable being arrived, he tied his horse to a tree, entered the park by a little door, of which he had the key, and was so lucky as to get into the castle unperceived. He went straight to the apartment of his wife, and concealing himself in an anti-chamber, behind a screen which he found there, purposed to observe from thence all that should pass, and to appear suddenly in Blanche's chamber, at the least noise he should hear. While he was in this situation, he saw Nisa come out from her mistress, and retire to the closet where she lay.

'Siffredi's daughter, who had easily discerned the motive of her husband's imprisonment, concluded, that he would not return that night to Belmont, although her father had told her, the king assured him the Constable would set out soon after him. She did not doubt that Henriquez would take the advantage of that conjuncture to visit and converse with her at liberty; and, in this opinion, she waited for the prince, in order to reproach him with an action which might have terrible consequences in regard to her. Accordingly, in a little time after Nisa had withdrawn, the partition opened, and the king came and threw himself at Blanche's feet, saying, "Madam, do not condemn before you have given me the hearing: if I have ordered the

Constable to be imprisoned, consider it was the only means I had left to justify myself; therefore impute that artifice to yourself alone. Why did you, this morning, refuse to hear me? Alas! to-morrow your husband will be enlarged, and I shall never have an opportunity of speaking to you again. Hear me, then, for this last time: if the loss of you makes me the most forlorn of mankind, at least grant me the melancholy consolation of convincing you, that my infidelity is not the cause of my misfortune; for though I confirmed to Constance the offer of my hand, it was what I could not dispense with doing, in the situation to which your father had reduced me. There was a necessity for my deceiving the princess, for your interest as well as my own, in order to secure to you the crown as well as the person of your lover. This I flattered myself with accomplishing, and had already taken measures to break that fatal engagement: but you have destroyed my plan; and, by giving yourself away too inconsiderately, laid up a fund of eternal sorrow for two hearts, which might have been rendered happy by the most inviolable love!"

'He ended this complaint with such visible marks of real despair, that Blanche was touched with his condition, and no longer doubted his innocence, which at first gave her some joy; but afterwards, stung by the consideration of her misfortune, "Ah, sir!" said she to the prince, "after the cruel determination of our fate, you increase my affliction, by letting me know that you were not guilty! What have I done! Unfortunate that I am! my resentment has betrayed me! I thought myself abandoned; and, in revenge, accepted of the Constable's hand, which

was presented by my father! I am guilty of the crime, and have been the cause of our mutual mishap! Alas! while I accused you of having deceived me, it was I, too credulous lover! it was I who broke those bonds which I had sworn to keep for ever inviolate! Revenge yourself, sir, in your turn. Hate the ungrateful Blanche! forget her!" "Ah, madam!" said Henriquez, interrupting her with a melancholy air, "how shall I find means to tear from my heart a passion, which even your injustice cannot extinguish!" "You must, however, make the effort," replied Siffredi's daughter, sighing. "What! are you capable of that effort yourself?" said the king. "I cannot promise to succeed," answered she, "but I will spare no pains in the endeavour."— "Ah, cruel Blanche!" said the prince; "you will easily forget Henriquez, since you are able to form such a design!" "And what can you expect?" replied she, in a more resolute tone: "do you flatter yourself that I will allow you to continue your addresses? No, sir; abandon that hope! Though I was not born to be a queen, heaven never formed me to listen to dishonourable love. My husband, as well as you, sir, is descended from the noble house of Anjou; and if my duty did not raise an insurmountable obstacle to your gallantry, my glory would hinder me from enduring it: I conjure you, therefore, to retire. We must see one another no more!" "Heavens! what barbarity!" replied the king: "Ah, Blanche! is it possible that you should treat me with such rigour? You do not think, then, that your being in the arms of the Constable, is enough to overwhelm me? you must also forbid me your sight, the only consolation I had

left!" "Fly me rather!" answered the daughter of Siffredi, shedding some tears: "the sight of what one tenderly loves, ceases to be pleasing, when the hope of possessing it is lost. Adieu, sir! Fly from me! you owe that effort to your own glory, and my reputation! I ask it also for my quiet: for, in short, although my virtue should not be alarmed by the emotions of my heart, the remembrance of your tenderness will entail upon me such cruel conflicts, that I shall scarce have strength enough to maintain them!"

'She pronounced these words so passionately, that she unwittingly overturned a candlestick which stood on a table behind her; and the candle going out in falling, she took it up in order to light it again; for which purpose she opened the door of the antichamber, and went to the closet of Nisa, who was not yet gone to bed. The king, who waited for her return, no sooner saw her approach with the light, than he made pressing instances to her, that she would suffer his attachment. The Constable hearing the prince's voice, rushed into the chamber sword in hand, almost at the same instant that his wife entered, and advancing toward Henriquez with all the resentment that his rage inspired, "This is too much, tyrant!" cried he: "think not that I am so base as to endure the affront thou hast done my honour!" "Traitor!" replied the king, putting himself in a posture of defence, "do not imagine that thou art able to execute thy designs with impunity!" With these words, they began a combat which was too furious to last long: the Constable, fearing that Siffredi and his servants, alarmed at the cries of Blanche, would soon come and oppose his vengeance, fought without cau-

tion. His rage divested him of all judgment; he took his measures so ill, that he run upon his adversary's sword, which entered his body to the hilt; and the moment he fell, the king checked his indignation.

'Leontio's daughter, touched with the condition in which she saw her husband, and surmounting the natural reluctance she had for him, threw herself on the floor, and supported him with the most eager concern. But that unhappy spouse was too much prepossessed against her, to be affected with these expressions of her grief and compassion. Death, whose approaches he felt, could not suppress the transports of his jealousy: he saw nothing in his last moments, but the happiness of his rival; and the idea appeared so horrid, that collecting all the strength he had left, he lifted the sword which was still in his hand, and plunged it in the breast of Blanche. "Die!" said he, while he stabbed her; "die, faithless woman! since the ties of marriage have been too weak to preserve that faith which you swore to me at the altar! And thou, Henriquez," added he; "boast not of thy fate. Thou canst not enjoy my misfortune, and therefore, I die satisfied." Having thus spoke, he expired; and his countenance, covered as it was with the shades of death, still retained something fierce and terrible. That of Blanche presented quite a different spectacle. The blow she received was mortal; she fell upon the body of her dying spouse, and the blood of this innocent victim was mixed with that of her murderer, who had executed his cruel resolution so suddenly, that the king had not time to prevent its effects.

'The unfortunate prince, seeing Blanche fall, uttered a loud cry; and, more confounded than she, with the blow that robbed her of life, hastened to give her the same succour that she had offered to the Constable. But she said, with a faltering voice, "Sir, you may spare yourself the trouble. I am the victim which unpitying fate demands: may it appease the wrath of heaven, and secure the happiness of your reign!" As she pronounced these words, Leontio, brought thither by her cries, entered her chamber; and, struck with the objects that presented themselves to his eyes, became motionless where he stood; while Blanche, without perceiving him, continuing to speak to the king, said, "Adieu, prince; cherish my memory! My love and misfortune claims that favour. Entertain no resentment against my father. Comfort his age and sorrow, and do justice to his zeal. Above all, make my innocence known. This is what I recommend to you more than any thing. Adieu, my dear Henriquez! I die—receive my last breath!"

'So saying, she expired; and the king, having kept a melancholy silence for some time, said to Siffredi, who was overwhelmed with wo, "Behold, Leontio! contemplate your own work; and, in this tragical event, consider the fruit of your officious care and zeal for me!" The old man was so penetrated with sorrow, that he made no reply. But why should I pretend to describe those things which no language can express! Let it suffice to say, that both uttered the most moving complaints, as soon as the greatness of their affliction allowed them the use of speech. The king all his life preserved the most tender

remembrance of his mistress, and could never be prevailed upon to marry Constance; who, being joined by the Infant Don Pedro, they spared nothing to avail themselves of Roger's last will: but they were at last obliged to yield to Prince Henriquez, who subdued all his enemies. As for Siffredi, the grief he felt for having been the cause of so many misfortunes, detached him from the world, and rendered his native country insupportable to him: he therefore abandoned Sicily, and crossing over into Spain, with Portia, the only child he had left, purchased this castle, where he lived near fifteen years after Blanche's death, and had the comfort, before he died, of seeing Portia settled: she married Don Jerome de Silva, and I am the only fruit of that marriage. This,' added the widow of Don Pedro de Pinares, 'is the history of my family, and a faithful account of the misfortunes represented in that picture, which my grandfather Leontio ordered to be drawn, as a monument of the fatal adventure to his posterity.'

CHAPTER V.

The behaviour of Aurora de Guzman at Salamanca.

Ortiz, her companions, and I, having heard this relation, withdrew, and left Aurora and Elvira in the hall, where they spent the rest of the day in conversation. Far from being tired with one another, the next day, when we set out, they were as much affected at parting, as two friends who have long lived agreeably together.

At last we arrived (without meeting with any bad accident) at Salamanca;* where we immediately took a house ready furnished, and Dame Ortiz, as we had concerted it, assumed the name of Donna Ximina de Guzman. She had been too long a duenna, not to be a good actress; accordingly, going out one morning with Aurora, a waiting-maid and valet, she repaired to a house where lodgings were let, and where we understood Pacheco usually lived. Having asked if they had an apartment to be let, they answered in the affirmative, and showed her into one pretty handsomely furnished; which she hired immediately, giving earnest to the landlady, and telling her that it was designed for one of her nephews, who was coming from Toledo to study at Salamanca, and would arrive that very day.

The duenna and my mistress having secured this lodging, went home again; and the fair Aurora without losing time, transformed herself into a cavalier, covering her black hair with a light-coloured tour, painting her eye-brows of the same complexion, and adjusting herself in such a manner as that she might very well pass for a young nobleman. Her carriage was free and easy; and, excepting her face, which was a little too handsome for a man, nothing could possibly betray her disguise: her maid, who was to serve in quality of a page, took the dress also; and we were under no apprehension of her ill-acting, for she had a good modest assurance in her air, which was very well adapted for the

* Salamanca is one of the largest cities in Spain, situated on the banks of the river Tormes, in the kingdom of Leon and famous for its university.

part she was to play. In the afternoon, these two actresses being in a condition to appear on the stage, (that is, in the lodging which had been taken,) I accompanied them thither in a coach, with all the baggage we should have occasion for.

The landlady, whose name was Bernarda Ramirez, received us with great civility, and conducted us to our apartment, where we began to enter into conversation, and agreed with her for our board by the month. Then asking if she had a good many boarders, she replied, 'I have none at present. I might have abundance, if I would take all sorts of people: but I receive none but young noblemen; and I expect one this evening, who comes from Madrid to finish his studies. His name is Don Lewis de Pacheco; perhaps you may have heard of him.'—'No,' said Aurora, 'I know nothing of him; and you will oblige me by letting me know what sort of a man he is, since I am to lodge in the same house with him.'—'Sir,' answered the landlady, looking at the false cavalier, 'he is quite a fine figure, and pretty much of your own make. Ah! how happy you will be in one another! By St. Jago, I may boast of having at my house, two of the most handsome noblemen in Spain!' —'This Don Lewis,' replied my mistress, 'has doubtless a thousand love-intrigues in Salamanca?'—'Yes, I'll assure you,' said the old woman, 'he is a brisk gallant, upon my word. He has no more to do, but to show himself and conquer; and among others, he has quite captivated a lady of youth and beauty, whose name is Isabella, an old lawyer's daughter, who is fond of him to distraction.'—'And tell me, good mother,' cried

Aurora, interrupting her with precipitation; 'is he as much in love with her?'—'he was,' replied Bernarda Ramirez, 'before his departure from Madrid; but I know not if he retains his passion for her still: for in these points he is not much to be depended upon; but skips from woman to woman, as all young gentlemen usually do.'

The good widow had scarce done speaking, when hearing a noise in the court-yard, we looked through the window, and perceived two men alighting from their horses: these were no other than Don Lewis de Pacheco himself, just arrived from Madrid, with his valet de chambre. Upon which, the old woman left us, in order to receive him; and my mistress prepared herself, not without emotion, to play the part of Don Felix. Lewis, in a short time, entered our apartment in his boots, and saluted Aurora, saying, 'Understanding that a young nobleman of Toledo is a lodger here, I beg leave to express my joy in having him for a companion.' While my mistress returned this compliment, Pacheco seemed surprised to see such an amiable cavalier; and could not help telling her, that he had never before beheld any man so handsome and genteelly made. A great many civilities passed on both sides, after which Don Lewis retired to the apartment allotted for him.

While he was shifting and dressing, a sort of page, who wanted to deliver a letter to him, meeting Aurora on the staircase by accident, mistook her for Don Lewis, and giving her the billet, said, 'Signior Cavalier, though I have never before seen Signior Pacheco, I believe I need not ask if you are he; being persuaded that I am not mistaken.'—'No, friend,' replied my

mistress, with admirable presence of mind; 'you are assuredly not mistaken, and you acquit yourself of your commission surprisingly well. I am Don Lewis de Pacheco; you may return, and I will take care to send an answer very soon.' The page disappearing, Aurora shut herself up with her maid and me, and opening the letter, read these words:

'With what joy did I receive the news of your arrival at Salamanca! My transports had well nigh got the better of my reason! But is Isabella still dear to you? Make haste, and assure her in person of your constancy; though she will scarce be able to support the pleasure of finding you unchanged!'

'This billet,' said Aurora, 'proclaims the violence of the writer's passion; and the lady is a rival not to be contemned. I must spare nothing to detach Don Lewis from her, and even to hinder him from seeing her: the undertaking, I own, is difficult; but, nevertheless, I don't despair of success.' Accordingly, my mistress, having mused a minute or two, added, 'I'll engage there shall be a breach between them in less than four and twenty hours.' Pacheco having taken a little repose in his own apartment, returned to ours, and renewed his conversation with Aurora, before supper. 'Signior Cavalier,' said he to her, with an air of pleasantry, 'I believe the husbands and lovers will have no cause to rejoice at your arrival in Salamanca, but rather have reason to be uneasy; as for my own part, I tremble for my conquests.'—'Hark'e,' answered my mistress, in the same tone, 'your

fear is not ill-grounded. Don Felix de Mendoza is a formidable man, I assure you. I have been in this country before, and know that the women here are not insensible. About a month ago, in my way through this city, I stopped here eight days; and I will tell you in confidence, that I inflamed an old lawyer's daughter.'

I perceived Don Lewis disordered at these words. 'May one, without being thought impertinent,' said he, 'ask the lady's name?'—'How! without being impertinent!' cried the pretended Don Felix; 'why should I make a mystery of it to you? Do you think me more reserved than other noblemen of my age? You must not do me so much injustice. Besides, between you and me, the object does not deserve such delicacy. She is only a pitiful citizen; and a man of quality, you know, is never seriously engrossed by such Abigails, but thinks he doth them an honour in debauching them. I will, therefore, without ceremony, acquaint you with the name of the lawyer's daughter, which is Isabella.'—'And the lawyer,' cried Pacheco, interrupting her with impatience: 'is not he called Signior Murcia de la Lianna?'—'The very same,' replied my mistress; 'here is a letter which I received from her just now: you may read it, and see whether or not the lady has a kindness for me.' Don Lewis, casting his eyes over the billet, knew the hand, and was struck dumb with confusion. 'What is the matter?' added Aurora, with an air of astonishment; 'you change colour! I believe, God forgive me! that you have some concern in this lady. Ah! how vexed am I for having spoke of her so freely!'

'I think myself obliged to you for your infor-

mation;' said Don Lewis, in a transport of anger and disdain. 'Perfidious, fickle creature! Don Felix, I am bound to you for ever. You have extricated me out of an error, in which I might have remained a long time. I thought myself beloved—beloved, did I say? believed myself adored by that Isabella! I had, indeed, some regard for the creature; but now I see she is a coquette, who deserves nothing but contempt.' —'I applaud your resentment,' said Aurora, feigning indignation in her turn; a lawyer's daughter ought to think herself very happy in having such an accomplished nobleman as you for a lover. Her inconstancy is inexcusable; and, far from accepting the sacrifice she makes of you, I intend to punish her by slighting her favours.'—'For my part,' replied Pacheco, 'the only vengeance that I shall take, is never to see her again.'—'You are in the right,' cried the false Mendoza; 'nevertheless, that she may know how much we both despise her, I think each of us should write to her an insulting letter, which I will enclose in one paper, and send as an answer to this her billet. But before we proceed to this extremity, consult your heart. Perhaps, you will one day repent of having broke with Isabella.'—'No, no!' said Don Lewis; I shall never be so weak; and, in the mean time consent to mortify the ungrateful creature as you have proposed.'

I was accordingly despatched for paper, pen, and ink; and both of them set about composing very obliging letters for the daughter of Doctor Murcia de Lianna. Pacheco, in particular, could not find terms strong enough to express his sentiments; and tore five or six half-finished

billets, because he thought they were not sufficiently severe. One, however, he was satisfied with at last; and, no doubt, he had reason so to be, for it contained these words:

'LEARN to know yourself, my princess, and to be no longer so vain as to believe that I love you. If I be captivated, it must be with other kind of merit than yours; which is scarce sufficient to amuse me for a few moments, and only calculated for diverting the meanest scholars of the university.'

This courteous letter being written, and Aurora having finished hers, which was not a whit milder, she sealed them both, and enclosing them together, gave me the packet, saying, 'There, Gil Blas; be sure to deliver this to Isabella this evening. You understand me?' added she, tipping me the wink, the meaning of which I could easily comprehend. 'Yes, sir,' answered I; 'the thing shall be done to your wish.'

At the same time, I went out, and being in the street, said to myself, 'Oho, Gil Blas! then it seems you play the valet in this farce. Well, friend, show that you have wit enough to perform such a fine part. Signior Don Felix, as you see, depends so much on your understanding, that he contents himself with giving you a sign only. Is he to blame for that? No. I conceive his meaning; he desires that I should deliver the billet of Don Lewis only. That is the interpretation of the sign, than which nothing could be more intelligible.' I did not hesitate to open the packet, from which I took Pacheco's letter,

and carried it to the house of Doctor Murcia, having soon informed myself whereabout he lived. Finding the little page, who had been at our lodgings, at the door, 'Brother,' said I, 'don't you serve the daughter of Mr. Doctor Murcia?' When he answered in the affirmative, 'you have such an obliging physiognomy,' I replied, 'that I take the liberty to desire you will deliver a love-letter to your mistress."

The page asked from whom I brought it; and I no sooner told him that it came from Don Lewis de Pacheco, than he said, 'Since it is so, follow me. I have orders to bring you in. Isabella wants to talk with you.' I allowed myself, therefore, to be introduced into a closet, where I did not stay long before the lady appeared; and I was struck with the beauty of her face, having never beheld more delicate features. Her air was affected and childish; but for all that, she had walked without leading-strings for thirty good years at least. 'Friend,' said she to me, with a smiling air, 'do you belong to Don Lewis de Pacheco?' I answered, that I had been his valet de chambre these three weeks; and then delivered the fatal letter, which she read over twice or thrice, and seemed to distrust the evidence of her own senses. It is very certain, she expected nothing less than such an answer. She lifted up her eyes toward heaven, bit her lips, and for some time discovered by her countenance, the pangs which her heart endured. Then, all of a sudden, addressing herself to me, 'Friend,' said she, 'is Don Lewis run mad? Tell me, if you know, why he writes to me in this gallant style. What demon possesses him? If he had a mind to break with me, could he not have

done it without affronting me with such abusive letters"

'Madam,' said I, 'my master is certainly to blame; but he was in some measure forced to it. If you will promise to keep the secret, I will discover the whole mystery.' 'I do promise?' said she, interrupting me with precipitation; 'don't be afraid of my exposing you, but freely explain yourself.' 'Well, then,' I resumed, 'this is briefly the affair. Immediately after he had received your letter, a lady, covered with a very thick veil, came to our lodging, and asking for Signior de Pacheco, spoke with him in private a good while; and towards the close of the conversation, I overheard her say to him, "You swear to me, that you will never see her again: but that is not all. You must also, for my satisfaction, this instant, write to her a billet which I will dictate, and this I exact of you." Don Lewis did as she desired; then, putting the letter into my hand, "Inquire," said she, "where Doctor Marcia de Lianna lives, and convey, with address, this paper to his daughter Isabella."

'So that you see, madam,' added I, 'this disobliging letter is the work of a rival, and consequently my master is not so much to blame.'—'O heaven!' cried she, 'he is more so than I imagined! His infidelity injures me more than the spiteful words which his hand wrote. Ah! the perfidious wretch! he has entered into other engagements!—But,' added she, assuming a lofty air, 'let him abandon himself to his new flame without constraint: I don't intend to thwart him. Tell him, that he had no occasion to insult me, in order to make me leave the field free to my

rival; and that I despise such a fickle lover too much to have the least desire of recalling him.' So saying, she dismissed me, and retired very much irritated against Don Lewis; while I went away very well satisfied with myself, and persuaded that if I should set up for a genius, I should soon become a most dexterous cheat. I returned to our lodgings, where I found Mendoza and Pacheco at supper, conversing together as if they had been old acquaintances. Aurora, perceiving by my cheerful countenance, that I had not acquitted myself ill of my commission; 'So, thou art returned, Gil Blas!' said she; 'give us an account of thy message.' Being obliged to trust to my own finesse again, I told them that I had delivered the packet with my own hand; and that Isabella, after having read the two billet-doux which it contained, instead of seeming disconcerted, fell a laughing, like one who had lost her senses; saying, 'Upon my conscience, young noblemen have an admirable style! It must be owned, that other people don't write half so agreeably.' 'A fine way of disembarrassing herself!' cried my mistress; 'she must certainly be a finished coquette.' 'As for me,' said Don Lewis, 'I should never know Isabella by such behaviour: she must have entirely changed her character during my absence.' 'I could not have thought her such a person, indeed,' replied Aurora; 'but we must allow that there are women who can assume a great many different shapes: I was once in love with one of these, who made me her dupe a long time. Gil Blas, you can tell that she had an air of virtue, which might have deceived the whole world.'

'Yes, truly,' said I, mingling in the conversation, 'she had a look that would have decoyed the most wary. I myself might have been trepanned by it.'

The pretended Mendoza and Pacheco burst into a loud laugh, on hearing me talk thus: one, because I bore witness against an imaginary lady; and the other, on account of the expression I had used. We continued discoursing of women who have the art of dissembling; and the result of our conversation was, that Isabella was accused in due form, and convicted of being an arrant jilt.

Don Lewis protested anew, that he would never see her; and Don Felix, by his example, swore he would always have the most perfect contempt for her. After these protestations, they professed a mutual friendship, and promised to conceal nothing from one another. Supper being over, they proceeded to compliments; and at last, parted to go to bed, each in his own apartment. I followed Aurora to hers, where I gave an exact account of the conversation I had with the doctor's daughter, not forgetting the least circumstance. I thought she would have embraced me in the transport of her joy. 'Dear Gil Blas,' said she, 'I am charmed with thy understanding! when one is so unfortunate as to be engaged in a passion which compels us to have recourse to stratagems, it is a great advantage to have in our interest such a sensible young fellow as thee. Courage, my friend! we have removed a rival who might have given us a world of trouble. This is no bad prognostic; but as lovers are subject to strange relapses, I think we must make a strong push, and bring Aurora de

Guzman on the stage to-morrow.' I approved of the scheme, and leaving Signior Don Felix with his page, retired to bed.

CHAPTER VI.

The stratagems practised by Aurora to captivate Don Lewis de Pacheco.

The two new friends meeting the next morning, began the day with embraces, which Aurora was obliged to give and receive, in order to act the part of Don Felix. They went out to walk, and I accompanied them with Chilindron, the valet of Don Lewis; when, stopping at the University to look at the titles of books that were pasted on the gate, which a good many people amused themselves in reading, I perceived a little man among them, who gave his opinion of all the different works that were so published. I observed that he was heard with great attention, which I fancied, at the same time, he believed was no more than his due; for he seemed vain and positive, as little men commonly are. 'That new translation of Horace,' said he, 'which you see advertised in such large characters, is a work in prose, composed by an old college author; a book in great esteem among the students, who have already consumed four editions of it: and yet there is not one man of taste who has purchased so much as a single copy.' His judgment was not a whit more favourable for the other books, which he ridiculed without exception; so that, in all likelihood, he was an author himself

I should not have been tired of hearing him to an end; but was obliged to follow Don Lewis and Don Felix, who being as little pleased with his discourse, as interested in the books which he censured, left him to the enjoyment of his own criticism.

We came home at dinner-time; and my mistress sitting down at table with Pacheco, artfully turned the conversation on her own family. 'My father,' said she, 'is a cadet of the house of Mendoza, and settled at Toledo; my mother is sister to Donna Ximena de Guzman, who came to Salamanca some days ago on an affair of importance, with her niece Aurora, the only daughter of Don Vincent de Guzman, whom, perhaps, you know.' 'No,' replied Don Lewis; 'but I have often heard of him, as well as of your cousin Aurora. Am I to believe what is reported of her? I have been assured that nothing equals her understanding but her beauty.' 'As for understanding,' resumed Don Felix, 'she has a pretty good share, and that well cultivated: but I don't think her so very handsome. People say, that she and I very much resemble one another.' 'If that be the case,' cried Pacheco, 'she deserves the reputation she has got: your features are regular; your cousin must be quite enchanting. I wish I had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with her.' 'I undertake to satisfy your curiosity,' replied the pretended Mendoza; 'and will carry you to my aunt's house this very afternoon.' My mistress, all of a sudden, changed the discourse, and talked on indifferent subjects. After dinner, while they were preparing to go and visit Donna Ximena, I was beforehand with them, and ran to advertise the

duenna, that she might be ready to receive them; then returning instantly, accompanied Don Felix, who conducted Don Lewis to the house of his aunt. But they had scarce entered the house, when they met Dame Ximena, who desired them, by a sign, to make no noise. 'Hush, hush!' said she, with a low voice, 'you will awake my niece, who has been tormented since yesterday with a terrible head-ache, which has just left her, and the poor child has been asleep about a quarter of an hour.' 'I am sorry for this disappointment,' said Mendoza; 'I was in good hopes of seeing my cousin, and had promised that pleasure to my good friend Pacheco.' 'The affair is not very urgent,' replied Ortiz, smiling; 'you may defer it till to-morrow.' The cavaliers conversed a little while with the old gentlewoman, and then retired.

Don Lewis carried us to the house of one of his friends, a gentleman whose name was Don Gabriel de Pedros, with whom we spent the rest of the day, supped, and did not think of coming home till two o'clock in the morning. We had got about half way, when we stumbled over two men lying stretched upon the ground. Thinking they were unfortunate people who had been assassinated, we stopped to give them assistance, provided it was not too late; and as we endeavoured to inform ourselves of their condition, as well as the darkness of the night would allow, the patrole came up, and the commander taking us at first for the murderers, ordered his men to surround us; but he conceived a more favourable opinion of our morals, when he heard us speak, and by the help of a dark lantern, saw the faces of Mendoza and Pacheco. His soldiers being ordered

to examine the condition of the two men, who we fancied had been slain, found that it was a fat licentiate, with his man, both in liquor, or rather dead drunk. 'Gentlemen,' cried one of the guard, 'I know this epicure; it is Signior the Licentiate Guyomar, rector of our university; notwithstanding the pickle you see him in now, he is a great man, a wonderful genius! There is not a philosopher in Salamanca whom he cannot confute in an argument. He has an unparalleled flow of words: 'tis a pity that he is a little addicted to law-suits, the bottle, and a wench. He was, no doubt, on his return from supping with his Isabella, where unluckily his man getting as drunk as himself, they both tumbled into the kennel. Before the good licentiate was rector, this misfortune frequently happened to him, and you see honours don't always change the man.' We left those drunkards in the hands of the patrole, who undertook to carry them home, and returning to our lodgings, every one went to rest.

Don Felix and Don Lewis getting up about noon, Aurora was the first subject of their discourse. 'Gil Blas,' said my mistress to me, 'go to my aunt Donna Ximena, and ask if Signior Pacheco and I can have the pleasure of seeing my cousin to-day.' I went out to acquit myself of this commission, or rather to concert with the duenna what was to be done; and when we had taken our measures, I returned to the false Mendoza, saying, 'Signior, your cousin Aurora is surprisingly well, and charged me to assure you from her, that your visit will be very agreeable; and Donna Ximena bid me assure Signior Pacheco that he shall always be welcome at her house, on your account.'

I perceived that Don Lewis was mightily pleased with these last words; my mistress observed the same, and drew a happy presage from her remark. Immediately before dinner, Signora Ximena's valet appeared, and said to Don Felix, 'Signior, a man from Toledo has been inquiring for you at your aunt's house, and left this note.' The pretended Mendoza opened it, and read aloud these words: 'If you are desirous of hearing news of your father, and of being made acquainted with other things of consequence to you, fail not, on receipt of this, to repair to the Black Horse near the university.'—'I am,' said he, 'too curious to hear these things of consequence, not to satisfy my desire instantly, without taking leave of you.—Pacheco,' added he, 'if I don't return in two hours, you may go by yourself to my aunt's, and I will come to you there, after dinner. You know what Gil Blas has told you from Donna Ximena, and you have a right to make the visit.' So saying, he went out, and ordered me to follow him.

You may easily guess, that instead of going to the Black Horse, we took the road to the house where Ortiz lived, where, as soon as we arrived, Aurora took off her fair-coloured tour, washed and rubbed her eye-brows, dressed herself like a woman, and became a very handsome black-eyed lady, as she naturally was; for her disguise had changed her so much, that Aurora and Don Felix appeared to be two different people. She even seemed a great deal taller as a woman, than as a man; to which, indeed, her shoe-heels, that were excessive high, contributed not a little. When she had improved her charms with all the assist-

ance that art could bestow, she expected Don Lewis with an agitation composed of hope and fear. Sometimes she confided in her beauty and wit, and sometimes was afraid that her attempt would be unsuccessful. Ortiz, on the other side, summoned all her finesse to second my mistress; and I, that Pacheco might not see me in the house, like those players who appear only in the last act, concealed myself till towards the end of the visit, by going out as soon as I had dined.

In short, every thing was in order when Don Lewis arrived. He was received in a very agreeable manner by lady Ximena, and enjoyed a conversation with Aurora two or three hours long; at the end of which, I came into the room where they were, and addressing myself to the cavalier, 'Signior,' said I, 'my master, Don Felix, cannot be here to-day: but begs you will excuse him, because he is in company with three men from Toledo, of whom he cannot disengage himself.'—'Ah! the little rake!' cried Donna Ximena, 'he is certainly set in to hard drinking.'—'No, madam,' I replied; 'they are discoursing together of very serious affairs. He is heartily sorry that he cannnot wait upon you, and ordered me to make his apology to you and Donna Aurora.'—'O, I'll have none of his apologies,' said my mistress; 'he knows I have been indisposed, and ought to show a little more concern for his relation. In order to punish him for his indifference, he shan't see me these fifteen days.'—'Ah, madam!' said Don Lewis, 'do not form such a cruel resolution; Don Felix is rather to be pitied for not being able to visit you.'

They diverted themselves for some time with

this subject, and then Pacheco withdrew. The fair Aurora immediately transformed herself, and resuming the appearance of a cavalier, returned to the lodgings as soon as she could. 'I ask pardon, my dear friend,' said she to Don Lewis, 'for failing to meet you at my aunt's, but I could not get rid of the people in whose company I was: what consoles me for the disappointment is, that you have at least had leisure to satisfy your curiosity. Well, what do you think of my cousin?"—'I am enchanted by her!' answered Pacheco; 'you had reason to say she resembled you. I never saw features more alike: the same turn of face, the same eyes, the same mouth, and tone of voice! There is, however, some difference between you. Aurora is a little taller than you; she is black, and you are fair; you are merry, and she is grave. These are what distinguish you the one from the other. As for understanding,' added he, 'I do not believe a celestial being can have more than your cousin. In a word, she is a lady of accomplished merit.'

Signior Pacheco pronounced these last words with so much vivacity, that Don Felix said, smiling, 'Friend, I advise you, for the sake of your repose, to go no more to Donna Ximena's. Aurora de Guzman may make your heart ache, and inspire you with a passion—' 'There is no occasion for another sight of her to make me in love,' said he, interrupting him; 'that is done already.'—'I am sorry for it,' replied the pretended Mendoza; 'for you are not one of those who can attach themselves to one; and my cousin is no Isabella. I can assure you, beforehand, that she will never listen to a lover, except on honourable terms.'—'Honourable terms!' replied

Don Lewis; 'sure nobody would offer any other to a young lady of her birth! Alas, I should think myself the happiest of men, if she would approve of my addresses, and consent to join her destiny to mine!'

'Since you talk in that style,' said Don Felix, 'I am interested in your behalf. Yes, I list myself in your service; offer you all my influence with Aurora; and will, to-morrow, bring over my aunt, who has a great sway over her. Pacheco returned a thousand thanks to the cavalier who made him such fair promises; and we perceived, with joy, that our stratagem could not succeed better. Next day, we increased the love of Don Lewis, by a new invention. My mistress, having been with Donna Ximena, on pretence to render her favourable to that cavalier, came back, and said to him, 'I have spoke to my aunt; whom, with much difficulty, I have made your friend. She was furiously prejudiced against you; for somebody or other had made her believe that you was a downright libertine; but I undertook your defence with eagerness, and at last destroyed the bad impression she had received of your morals.

'This is not all,' pursued Aurora; 'you must talk with my aunt, in my presence, and then we shall make sure of her assistance.' Pacheco expressed extreme impatience to discourse with Donna Ximena, and that satisfaction was granted to him next morning, when the false Mendoza conducted him to Madam Ortiz, and they three had a long conversation; in which Don Lewis showed, that he had allowed himself to be very much captivated in a very little time. The artful Ximena feigned to be moved with all the ten-

derness he expressed, and promised her utmost endeavour to engage her niece to marry him. Pacheco immediately threw himself at the feet of this so kind an aunt, and thanked her for her friendship; whereupon Don Felix asked if his cousin was up. 'No,' answered the duenna 'she is still a-bed, and you cannot see her at present; but return this afternoon, and you may converse with her at leisure.' This answer of Madam Ximena redoubled, as you may well believe, the joy of Don Lewis, who thought the rest of the forenoon extremely tedious, and went back to his lodgings with Mendoza, who was not a little pleased with observing in him all the marks of genuine love.

They talk . of nothing but Aurora; and when they had d d, Don Felix said to Pacheco, 'There is r thought come into my head: I am of opinion at I should go to my aunt's some minutes be re you, and have a little chat with my cousin, at I may, if possible, discover the disposition f her heart towards you.' Don Lewis, approving this scheme, let his friend go before, and did not set out till an hour after. So my mistress made such good use of her time, that she was dressed like a lady, when her lover arrived. 'I thought,' said the cavalier, after having saluted Aurora and the duenna, 'to have found Don Felix here.'—'You will see him immediately,' answered Donna Ximena; 'he is writing in my closet.' Upon which Pacheco seemed to swallow the trick, and entered into conversation with the ladies: but, notwithstanding the presence of the beloved object, he perceived that the hours stole away without Mendoza's appearing: and, as he could not help testifying

some surprise at it, Aurora changing countenance all of a sudden, began to laugh, and said to Don Lewis, 'Is it possible that you have no suspicion of the trick which has been played upon you? Do an artificial light-coloured tour, and painted eye-brows, make me so unlike myself, that you have been mistaken by them hitherto? Undeceive yourself, then, Pacheco,' continued she, resuming an air of gravity; 'and know that Don Felix de Mendoza, and Aurora de Guzman, are but one and the same person!'

She was not contented with extricating him out of his error, but also owned her passion for him, and informed him of all the steps she had taken towards its success. Don Lewis, no less charmed than surprised with what he heard, threw himself at her feet, exclaiming in a transport of joy, 'Ah, beautiful Aurora! may I then believe myself the happy mortal whom you have favoured so much? How shall I recompense your goodness, which the most perfect love can never enough repay?' These words were accompanied with a thousand more passionate and tender expressions; after which, the two lovers conferred upon the measures that were to be taken towards the accomplishment of their mutual desires; and it was resolved that we should set out immediately for Madrid, and bring our comedy to a conclusion by marriage. This design was no sooner formed than put in execution: in fifteen days Don Lewis espoused my mistress; and their nuptials gave rise to entertainments and infinite rejoicings.

CHAPTER VII.

Gil Blas quits his place, and goes into the service of Don Gonzales de Pacheco.

THREE weeks after this marriage, my mistress being desirous of recompensing me for the services I had done her, made me a present of a hundred pistoles, saying, 'Gil Blas, far from turning you away, I leave it to your choice to stay with me as long as you please; but my husband's uncle, Don Gonzales de Pacheco, wants to have you for a valet de chambre. I spoke to him so advantageously of you, that he assured me I would do him a favour in parting with you to him. He is an old nobleman,' added she, 'of an excellent character, and you will be quite happy in his service.'

I thanked Aurora for her generosity, and as she had no longer any occasion for me, accepted the post to which I was recommended; the more willingly, as I should still be in the family. One morning, therefore, I went with a message from my new-married mistress, to Signior Don Gonzales, who was still a-bed, although it was near twelve o'clock. When I entered his chamber, I found him taking some broth, which a page had brought in. The old gentleman's whiskers were in papers, his eyes almost quite extinguished, and his face pale and meagre. He was one of those old boys, who have been great rakes in their youth, and are not a whit more sedate in their old age. He received me with

great civility, and told me that if I would serve him with as much zeal as I had manifested for his niece, I might depend upon living happily. I promised to have the same attachment to him which I had for her; and that moment he engaged me in his service.

Behold me, then, with a new master; and heaven knows what sort of a man he was! When he got up, I fancied I saw the resurrection of Lazarus. Paint to your own imagination a tall body, so lean and withered, that when it was naked, an anatomist might have taught osteology upon it; with legs so small, that they looked like spindles, after he had put on three or four pair of stockings. This living mummy was besides troubled with an asthma, and coughed at every word he spoke. Having drank chocolate, he called for paper and ink, and wrote a letter, which he sealed and sent away, according to the direction, by the page who had brought the broth: then turning to me, 'Friend,' said he, 'thou art the person whom I intend henceforth to trust with my commissions, especially those which regard Donna Euphrasia, a young lady whom I love, and who is passionately fond of me.'—'Good God!' said I to myself, 'how can young people help believing themselves beloved, when this old dotard thinks himself adored!'—'Gil Blas,' added he, 'thou shalt go with me this very day to her house, where I sup almost every night, and thou wilt be charmed with her prudence and reserve: far from resembling those silly coquettes, who can relish nothing but youth, and are won by appearances only, she has an understanding already mature and judicious, that requires sentiment in a man, and prefers a lover

of delicacy and taste, to one of the most shining exteriors.' Signior Don Gonzales did not here finish the eulogium of his mistress, whom he represented as the epitome of all perfection. But he had a hearer not easily persuaded. After the conduct of the actresses, which I had seen, I did not look upon old noblemen as people very happy in their amours. I pretended, however, out of complaisance, to believe all that my master said. I did more; I extolled the discernment and taste of Euphrasia, and was even impudent enough to affirm, that she could not have a more amiable gallant.

The good old gentleman did not perceive that I had made game of him; but, on the contrary, applauded my good sense. So true it is, that a sycophant may run any risk with the great, who swallow all kinds of flattery, let it be ever so absurd. The old man having written his letter, pulled some hairs out of his beard with a pair of pincers, cleaned his eyes of a thick gum that filled them, washed his ears and hands, and after having performed his ablutions, painted his whiskers, eyebrows, and hair, of a black colour; continuing longer at his toilet than an old widow who studies to hide the outrage of time upon her. Just as he had done dressing, another gentleman in years, one of his friends, entered, whose name was the Count d'Asumar. But he, far from concealing his gray hairs, supported himself on a cane, and seemed to glory in his old age, rather than in appearing young. 'Signior Pacheco,' said he, as he came in, 'I am come to dine with you.' 'You are very welcome, Count,' answered my master. Meanwhile, having embraced one another, they sat down, and entered into

conversation, till such time as dinner was ready.

The discourse turned at first upon a bull-feast, which had been celebrated a few days before; and as they mentioned the cavaliers who had shown the greatest vigour and address, the old count, like another Nestor, who, from talking of the present, always took occasion to praise the past, said, with a sigh, 'Alas! I see no men now-a-days comparable to those I have known heretofore; and the tournaments are not performed with half the magnificence that they were when I was a young man!' I laughed within myself at the prejudice of honest Signior d'Asumar, who did not confine it to tournaments only; but I remember, when the dessert was set upon the table, seeing some fine peaches served up, he observed, 'In my time, the peaches were much larger than they are at present; nature degenerates every day.' 'At that rate,' said Don Gonzales, smiling, 'the peaches of Adam's time must have been wonderfully large!'

Count d'Asumar staid almost the whole day with my master; who no sooner found himself disengaged, than he went out, bidding me to follow him. He went to Euphrasia's, who lodged at the distance of a hundred paces from our house; and found her in a very handsome apartment. She was gayly dressed, and had such a youthful air, that I concluded she was under age, although she was good thirty years old at the least. She was really handsome, and her understanding soon raised my admiration; for she was not one of those coquettes who have nothing to recommend them but idle ribaldry and loose behaviour: she was modest in her manners, as well

as in her conversation, and talked with a great deal of wit, without the least affectation. 'O heaven!' said I to myself, 'is it possible that a person of such delicacy can be a lady of pleasure?' I imagined that impudence was inseparable from all women of her profession, and was astonished to see one with the appearance of modesty; not reflecting that these princesses know how to assume any shape, and accommodate themselves to the characters of the people of fortune and nobility that fall into their hands. When their gallants are pleased with fire and transport, they are brisk and petulant; and with those who love reserve, practise a prudent and virtuous behaviour. They are the true cameleons, who change colour according to the humour and disposition of the men they approach.

Don Gonzales was none of those noblemen who are taken with your bold beauties; he could not bear ladies of that class: on the contrary, could relish no woman, unless she had the appearance of a vestal. Euphrasia, therefore, modelled herself accordingly, and showed that all the good actresses are not employed in the theatre. Leaving my master with his nymph, I went down stairs into a hall, where I found an old chambermaid, whom I had known a waiting-woman to an actress. Recollecting me immediately, she said, 'What! is it you, Gil Blas? You have quitted Arsenia, it seems, as I did Constantia.' 'Yes, truly,' answered I; 'it is a long time since I left her, and went to serve a young lady of fashion. A player's life is not to my taste, and therefore dismissed myself without deigning to come to the least explanation with Arsenia.' 'You was in

the right,' replied the chambermaid, whose name was Beatrice; 'I served Constantia pretty much in the same manner: one morning early I gave in my accounts very coldly, which she received without uttering a syllable, and so we parted cavalierly enough.'

'I am extremely glad,' said I, 'that we now meet in a more honourable house: Donna Euphrasia seems to be a sort of woman of fashion, and I believe her character is very good.' 'You are not at all mistaken,' said the old waiting-woman; 'she is of a very good family; and as for her temper, I can assure you, there never was one more equal and sweet. She is none of those passionate and difficult mistresses, who find fault with every thing; scold incessantly; torment their domestics; and, in one word, make a hell of their service. I never once heard her grumble; but when I happen to do any thing contrary to her inclination, she reproves me without rage, and never lets one of those epithets escape her, of which your violent dames are so liberal.' 'My master,' I resumed, 'is also very sweet tempered: he is the best natured mortal alive; and therefore you and I are much more happy than when we were in the service of actresses.' 'A thousand times more happy!' replied Beatrice; 'instead of leading a life of noise and tumult, I now live, as it were, in a retreat. No man enters these doors but Signior Don Gonzales. I shall see nobody but you in my solitude, for which I am not at all sorry; for I have had an affection for you a long time, and more than once envied the happiness of Laura in having you for a gallant. But, in short, I hope to be as happy as she; for

though I have neither her youth nor her beauty, by way of amends, I hate coquetry, and am as faithful as a turtle.'

As honest Beatrice was one of those persons who are obliged to make a tender of their favours, because nobody will ask them, I was not at all tempted to profit by her advances: I did not desire, however, that she should perceive my contempt, and was even polite enough to express myself in such a manner, as that she did not lose all hopes of engaging my heart. I imagined then that I had made a conquest of an old chambermaid, but happened, on this occasion, to be deceived; she did not behave in this manner to me, for my own sake only; her design was to inspire me with love, that she might bring me over to the interest of her mistress, for whom she was so zealous, that she did not mind what it cost her in promoting her advantage. I found my error, next morning, when I carried a billet-doux from my master to Euphrasia. That lady gave me a most gracious reception, and said a thousand obliging things, in which she was joined by her maid: one admired my physiognomy, while the other observed in me an air of prudence and sagacity. According to them, Signior Don Gonzales possessed a treasure in having such a valet. In a word, they praised me so much, that I suspected their applause, and even discerned the motives of it; but I received it, in appearance, with all the simplicity of a fool, and by this counterplot effectually deceived the sharpers, who at last pulled off the mask.

'Hark'e, Gil Blas,' said Euphrasia to me, 'it depends upon thyself to make thy fortune. Let us act in concert, my friend. Don Gonzales is

old, and his constitution so crazy, that the least touch of a fever, assisted by an able physician, will carry him off. Let us make the best of the little time he has left, and exert ourselves so, as that he may leave the best part of his estate to me. Thou shalt have a good share of the booty, and thou mayest depend upon my promise, as much as if I had made it before all the notaries of Madrid.' 'Madam,' answered I, 'you may command your humble servant. You have nothing to do, but to prescribe my conduct, and you shall be satisfied.' 'Very well,' she replied; 'thou must observe thy master, and give me an account of all his proceedings: when you talk to him in private, don't fail to turn the conversation upon women, and from thence artfully take occasion to speak well of me. Ply him with Euphrasia as much as possible; and I again recommend it to you, to be very attentive to what passes in the family of the Pachecos; if you perceive that any relation of Don Gonzales is extremely officious about him, and aims at the succession to his estate, acquaint me with it immediately; that is all I ask, and I warrant I shall send him adrift in a very little time; for I know the different characters of his relations, and the ridiculous lights in which they may be represented to him; having already prejudiced him pretty successfully against all his nephews and cousins.'

By these instructions, and others which Euphrasia added, I concluded that this lady was one of those who attached themselves to generous old men. She had lately prevailed upon Don Gonzales to sell an estate, the price of which she had converted to her own use; she extorted

from him valuable moveables every day; and, besides, had reason to hope that she would not be forgotten in his will. I pretended to engage willingly to do all that she desired; and, dissimulation apart, doubted within myself, on my return home, whether I should contribute to impose upon my master, or undertake to detach him from his mistress. The last of these resolutions seemed more honourable than the other, and I felt myself more inclined to fulfil than betray my duty: besides, Euphrasia had made me no positive promise, and that, perhaps, was the occasion of my fidelity's remaining uncorrupted. I resolved, therefore, to serve Don Gonzales with zeal, persuading myself, that if I should be lucky enough to divert his affection from his idol, I should be better rewarded for this good action, than for all the bad ones I could commit.

That I might the more easily accomplish what I proposed, I showed myself entirely devoted to the service of Donna Euphrasia; I made her believe, that I spoke of her incessantly to my master; and accordingly invented fables, which she took for sterling truth. I insinuated myself so much into her good graces, that she thought me entirely in her interest; and still, the better to impose upon her, affected to appear in love with Beatrice; who, ravished to see, at her age, a young lover at her back, did not much mind being deceived, provided she was deceived agreeably. While my master and I were each with his own princess, we composed two very different pictures in the same taste. Don Gonzales, pale and withered as I have represented him, when he attempted to ogle, looked like a wretch in his last agonies; and my infanta, in proportio

to the seeming increase of my passion, assumed still more and more childish airs, and practised all the artifice of an old coquette, which she had been learning these forty years at least; having been refined in the service of some of those heroines of gallantry, who can please even in their old age, and die loaded with the spoils of two or three generations.

I was not satisfied with following my master, every evening, to the house of Euphrasia; I sometimes went thither, alone, by day; but at what hour soever I went in, I never met with any man, or woman either, of a suspicious appearance; nor could I discover the least trace of infidelity; a circumstance that surprised me not a little: for I could not imagine that such a handsome lady could be exactly true to Don Gonzales. And in this, surely, my judgment was not too rash; for the fair Euphrasia, (as you will presently see) that she might wait with the more patience for my master's estate, was provided with a lover more agreeable to a woman of her age.

One morning, when I carried, as usual, a letter to the princess, I perceived, while I was in her chamber, the feet of a man concealed behind the tapestry. I went away without seeming to observe them; but although I ought not to have been surprised at this object, which was no business of mine, I did not fail to resent it. 'Ah, perfidious wretch!' said I to myself, in a passion, 'ah, wicked Euphrasia! thou art not satisfied with imposing upon a good old gentleman, by persuading him that he is beloved, but thou must also crown thy perfidy, by abandoning thyself to another!' What a fool was I (now I think on it)

to moralize in this manner! I ought rather to have laughed at the adventure, and looked upon it as a compensation for the tiresome, languid moments she underwent in her commerce with my master: I should, at least, have done better in holding my tongue, than in seizing this occasion of acting the conscious valet. But, instead of moderating my zeal, I entered warmly into the interest of Don Gonzales, to whom I made a faithful report of what I had seen: I even added, that Euphrasia wanted to seduce me! I concealed nothing of what she had said on that occasion; and it was his own fault if he was not perfectly acquainted with the character of his mistress. He was confounded at the information, and a small emotion of wrath, that appeared in his countenance, seemed to presage that the lady should not be unfaithful to him with impunity. 'Enough, Gil Blas,' said he: 'I am extremely sensible of thy attachment, and pleased with thy fidelity; I will go instantly to Euphrasia, load her with reproaches, and break for ever with the ungrateful creature!' So saying, he went out accordingly; and dispensed with my attendance, that he might spare me the disagreeable part I had to play during their eclaircissement.

I waited for my master's return with a world of impatience; not doubting, that as he had so much cause to complain of his nymph, he would come back altogether detached from her allurements. On this supposition, I applauded myself for what I had done; I represented to myself the satisfaction which the natural heirs of Don Gonzales would have, when they learned that their kinsman was no longer the sport of a passion so contrary to their interests; I flattered

myself that they would consider me for it; and, in short, that I had distinguished myself from other valets, who are usually more apt to encourage their masters in debauchery than to reclaim them. I was in love with honour; and reflected with pleasure, that I should pass for the Coryphæus of all domestics. But this idea, agreeable as it was, vanished in a few hours; when my patron arriving, said, 'Friend, I have had a very sharp conversation with Euphrasia, who affirms, that thou hast misrepresented her, and art, if she is to be believed, no other than an impostor, altogether devoted to my nephews; out of regard to whom, thou sparest nothing to make me quarrel with her. I saw real tears trickle from her eyes, and she swore by all that was sacred, that she never made any proposal to thee, nor ever sees a man. Beatrice, who seems to be a good girl, protested the same thing, in such a manner, that my anger was appeased in spite of my teeth.'

'How, sir!' said I, interrupting him in a sorrowful manner, 'do you doubt my sincerity? do you distrust—' 'No, child,' said he, interrupting me in his turn; 'I do thee all manner of justice: I don't believe thee in a confederacy with my nephews. I am persuaded that thou art concerned for my interest only, and I am obliged to thee; but appearances are deceitful. Perhaps, what thou sawest, existed only in thy own imagination! and, in that case, thou mayest guess how disagreeable thy accusation must be to Euphrasia. Be it as it may, she is a person whom I cannot help loving. I must even make the sacrifice to her which she demands, and that sacrifice is thy dismission. I am sorry for it, my

poor Gil Blas,' added he; 'and I assure thee, I consented to it with regret; but I could not do otherwise. What ought to console thee is, that I shall not send thee away unrecompensed; and I intend, moreover, to settle thee with a lady, a friend of mine, where thou wilt live very agreeably.'

I was very much mortified to see my zeal thus turned against myself: I cursed Euphrasia, and deplored the weakness of Don Gonzales, who allowed himself to be led by the nose. The good old man being very sensible that in turning me away, merely to please his mistress, he did not behave in the most manly manner, made amends for his effeminacy, and gilded the pill I was to swallow with a present of fifty ducats. Next day, carrying me to the Marchioness of Chaves, he told her, in my hearing, that I was a young man who possessed many good qualities; that he had a regard for me, but family reasons not permitting him to keep me in his service, he begged she would admit me into her family. She received me that instant into the number of her domestics: so that I found myself translated, all of a sudden, into a new place.

CHAPTER VIII.

The character of the Marchioness of Chaves, and of those people who usually visited her.

The Marchioness of Chaves was a widow of five-and-thirty, handsome, tall, and well shaped, who enjoyed a yearly income of ten thousand

ducats, without the care and incumbrance of children. I never saw a woman of more gravity, or one who spoke less; though this did not hinder her from being looked upon as the most witty lady in Madrid. The great concourse of people of quality, and men of learning, who daily frequented her house, contributed, perhaps, more than any thing she said, to give her this reputation. But this I will not undertake to decide; let it suffice to say, that her name imported the idea of a superior genius, and that her house was called, by way of excellence, *the Court of Criticism.*

There was actually some performance or other read here every day, sometimes new plays, and sometimes other pieces of poetry; but nothing except serious subjects were deemed worthy of attention, humorous pieces being despised; the best comedy, or the most ingenious or witty romance, was looked upon as a feeble production, that deserved no praise; whereas the least serious work, such as an ode, eclogue, or sonnet, passed for the greatest effort of human understanding. But it often happened, that the public did not confirm the sentence of the court; on the contrary, was sometimes so impolite as to hiss those pieces which had been there very much applauded.

I was chamberlain in this house; that is, my office consisted in getting every thing ready in the apartment of my lady, for the reception of company, and to set the chairs for the men, and the cushions for the women; after which I stationed myself at the chamber-door, to announce*

* The announcer, from the Latin word *anunciare*, is a

and introduce the persons who arrived. While I was employed in this office, for the first time, the governor of the pages, who by accident was then in the antichamber with me, described them all very pleasantly as they came in. His name was Andrew Molina, naturally dry and satirical, with a good share of understanding. A bishop being the first who presented himself, I announced him; and when he was entered, the governor observed, 'That prelate is a man of a very pleasant character: having a little credit at court, he would fain make every one believe that he has a great deal, and offers his interest to all the world, without serving any body. One day, meeting at court with a gentleman who saluted him, he stopped, loaded him with civilities, and, squeezing his hand, said, "I am wholly devoted to your service; pray, sir, put me to the proof: I shall never die satisfied until I have an opportunity of obliging you!" The gentleman thanked him in a very grateful manner; they parted; and the prelate said to one of his followers, "I think I know that man; I have a confused idea of having seen him somewhere."

Immediately after the bishop, the son of a grandee appeared; and when I had introduced him into my lady's chamber, 'That nobleman,' said Molina, 'is another original. You must know, that he goes often to a house, in order to treat of some important affair with the gentleman who lives in it, and comes away without remembering to speak a syllable about the matter. 'But,' added the governor, seeing two

domestic, who stands in the hall on visiting days, and pronounces aloud the names of the company as they enter

ladies advance, 'there come Donna Angelo de Pennafiel, and Donna Margarita de Montalvan, two ladies between whom there is not the least resemblance: Donna Margarita, who piques herself on being a philosopher, will undertake the most profound doctors of Salamanca in a dispute, without suffering their arguments to get the better of her argumentation. As for Donna Angelo, she does not affect the virtuoso, although her understanding is perfectly well cultivated: her conversation is sensible, her sentiments refined, and her expression delicate, noble, and natural.' 'This last is an amiable character,' said I to Molina; 'but the other, in my opinion, is inconsistent with the fair sex.' 'Not very inconsistent!' he replied with a sneer: 'and even a great many men are rendered ridiculous by such a disposition. Madam the marchioness, our lady,' continued he, 'is also a little tainted with philosophy. What wrangling will there be here today! God grant that religion may not be concerned in the dispute!'

As he spoke these words, we perceived a meagre man come in, with an air of reserve and a grim countenance. My governor did not spare him. 'This here,' said he, 'is one of your serious wits, who would fain pass for great geniuses, by the favour of a few sentences learned from Seneca, and who are easily detected to be fools, if you examine them a little closely.' The next that came in was a well-shaped cavalier, with a Grecian mien, that is, a very self-sufficient appearance: when I asked who he was, Molina answered, 'He is a dramatic poet, who has composed, in his time, a hundred thousand

verses, which never brought him in four-pence. but, in recompense for that, he has procured a considerable settlement, by six lines of prose.'

I was going to inform myself of the nature of a fortune got so easily, when I heard a great noise on the staircase. 'Good!' cried the governor, 'there comes the Licentiate Campanario, who gives notice of his approach before he appears; and, beginning to talk at the street-door, continues without intermission until he goes away.' Sure enough, the whole house rang again with the voice of the thundering licentiate; who, at length, entered the anti-chamber with a bachelor of his acquaintance, and did not leave off speaking all the time his visit lasted. 'Signior Campanario,' said I to Molina, 'seems to be a great genius.' 'Yes,' replied my governor; 'he has some bright sallies, quaint expressions, and a good deal of humour; but, over and above his being an unconscionable talker, he does not fail to make repetitions; and, not to overrate his talents, I believe the agreeable and comic air with which he seasons every thing he says, constitutes his chief merit: for the greatest part of his strokes would do no great honour to a collection of witticisms.'

Abundance of other people came in, of whom Molina made very humorous pictures, among which he did not forget that of the Marchioness. 'I assure you,' said he, 'our patroness is a lady of a very even temper, in spite of all her philosophy. She is not at all difficult to please, and one is subjected to very few caprices in her service. She is one of the most reasonable women of quality I know, and is even without passion; she has as little taste for gallantry as for play;

and loves conversation only: in short, most ladies would think her way of life insupportably tiresome.' The governor, by this eulogium, prepossessed me in favour of my mistress; nevertheless, some days after, I could not help suspecting that she was not such an enemy to love: and I will relate on what foundation my suspicion was built.

One morning, while she was at her toilet, a little man presented himself to me, about forty years old, of a disagreeable figure, more dirty than the author Pedro de Moya, and very much hunch-backed into the bargain. When he told me he wanted to speak with the marchioness, I asked him, 'From whom?' To which he answered, with a haughty look, 'From myself: tell her I am the gentleman of whom she spoke yesterday to Donna Anna de Velasco.' I introduced him into my lady's apartment, and signified his arrival; upon which she immediately exclaimed, in a transport of joy, 'Show him in!' She not only gave him a favourable reception, but likewise ordered all her women out of the room; so that the little hunch-back, more happy than an honester man, remained alone with her; while the chamber-maids and I made ourselves merry with this fine tête-à-tête, that lasted near an hour; after which, my patroness dismissed the crookback, loaded with civilities, that showed how well she was satisfied with his conversation; which, in effect, captivated her so much, that she told me, one evening, in private, 'Gil Blas, when the man with the hunch returns, bring him into my apartment as secretly as possible.' I obeyed; and when the little man came back next morning, conducted him by a private stair-

case to my lady's chamber. I performed the same office, most devoutly, two or three times, without suspecting that there could be any gallantry in the case; but the malignity which is so natural to mankind soon inspired me with strange ideas; and I concluded, that the inclination of the marchioness was either very whimsical, or that the hunch-back acted the part of a go-between.

Prepossessed with this opinion, I often said to myself, 'If my lady is in love with a handsome man, I forgive her; but if she is captivated with this baboon, truly I cannot excuse the depravity of her taste.' How much was I mistaken in my patroness! the little hunch-back dabbled in magic; and, as his skill had been extolled to the marchioness, who willingly listened to the delusions of such impostors, she honoured him with these private conversations, in which he showed her things in a glass; taught her to turn the sieve; and, for money, revealed all the mysteries of the cabala; or rather, to speak truly, he was a sharper who subsisted at the expense of credulous people, and was said to have several women of quality under contribution.

CHAPTER IX.

The incident in consequence of which Gil Blas quitted the Marchioness de Chaves; and the course he followed afterwards.

I had already lived six months with the Marchioness de Chaves; and, I confess, was satisfied

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with my condition: but the destiny I had to fulfil would not permit me to live longer in that lady's house, nor even in Madrid; I will therefore recount the adventure that obliged me to remove from both.

Among my lady's maids, there was one named Portia; who, besides her youth and beauty, possessed such an amiable character, that I attached myself to her, without knowing that I must dispute her heart with a rival. The secretary of the marchioness, who was a proud man, and very much addicted to jealousy, being captivated with my princess, no sooner perceived my passion, than, without endeavouring to find out my reception with Portia, he resolved to fight me in single combat, and for this purpose appointed me to meet him one morning in a private place. As he was a little man, whose head scarce reached my shoulders, and seemed at the same time very weak, I did not think him a very dangerous rival, but repaired with great confidence to the place appointed, in hopes of gaining an easy victory, and making a merit of it with Portia: but the event did not answer my expectation. The little secretary, who had been two or three years at the fencing-school, disarmed me like an infant, and holding the point of his sword to my throat, 'Prepare,' said he, 'for the mortal blow; or else give me thy word of honour that thou wilt this day quit the service of the Marchioness de Chaves, and never more think of Portia.' I made him that promise, and kept it without reluctance; being ashamed to appear before the rest of the servants, after my defeat, especially before the fair Helen who had been the cause of our duel. My sole intention in re-

turning to the house, was to carry off my goods and money, which having done, I set out the same day for Toledo; my purse being pretty well furnished, and my back loaded with a bundle composed of my whole wearing-apparel: for though I had not engaged to quit Madrid, I thought proper to leave it, at least for some years; and formed the resolution of making the tour of Spain, and of halting at every town. 'The money I have,' said I to myself, 'will carry me a great way; for I don't intend to be extravagant; and when I have no more, I will betake myself again to service. A young man of my accomplishments will find places in abundance, whenever he pleases to go in quest of them.'

I longed, in particular, to see Toledo; whither I arrived at the end of three days, and took up my lodging at a good inn, where I passed for a gentleman of consequence, by the favour of my intriguing dress, which I did not fail to put on, and by the foppish airs which I affected. It was in my own option to establish a correspondence with some handsome women who lived in the neighbourhood: but understanding that I must begin by spending a good deal of money upon them, I bridled my desires; and feeling still a strong inclination for travelling, after having seen every thing that was curious in Toledo, I left it one morning by break of day, and took the road to Cuenca, with an intention to go to Arragon. On the second day of my journey, I went into an inn on the road; and just as I sat down to refresh myself, a company of soldiers belonging to the Holy Brotherhood came in, and calling for wine, fell a drinking. While they were over their cups, I heard them describe a young man

whom they had orders to apprehend. 'The gentleman,' said one of them, 'is not more than twenty years of age, has long black hair, a good shape, an aquiline nose, and is mounted on a bay horse.'

I listened without seeming to give attention to what they said, and truly I did not concern myself much about the matter. Leaving them in the inn, I set forward on my journey, and had not walked a quarter of a league, when I met a young gentleman of a good mien, mounted on a chesnut-coloured horse. 'Upon my faith,' said I to myself, 'this is the man whom the soldiers are in search of: he has long black hair, and an aquiline nose. I must do him a good office. 'Sir,' said I to him, 'give me leave to ask, whether or not you have some affair of honour on your hands?' The young gentleman, without making any reply, looked earnestly at me, and seemed surprised at my question. Upon which I assured him, that it was not out of curiosity that I had addressed him in this manner; and he was very well convinced of it, when I told him what I had overheard at the inn. 'Generous stranger,' said he, 'I will not deny that I have reason to believe myself the person whom these soldiers want to apprehend; and therefore will take another road, in order to avoid them.' 'It is my opinion,' I replied, 'that we should immediately seek some place where you may be secure, and where we may be sheltered from that storm which I see brewing in the air, and which will burst very soon.' At that instant, we discovered and repaired to a tufted alley of trees, that conducted us to the foot of a mountain, where we found a hermitage.

It was a large deep grotto, that time had scooped in the rock, to which the art of man had added a kind of front, built of pebbles and shell-work, and quite covered with turf: the adjacent field was strewed with a thousand sorts of flowers, which perfumed the air; and hard by the grotto we perceived a little opening in the rock, from whence issued, with an agreeable noise, a spring of water that run winding along a meadow. At the entrance of this solitary habitation appeared a holy hermit; stooping under the weight of old age, supporting himself with a staff in one hand, and holding in the other a rosary of large beads, composed of twenty courses at least. His head was buried in a brown woollen cap, with long ears, and his beard, more white than snow, came down to his middle. When we approached him, 'Father,' said I, 'be so good as to favour us with shelter from the impending storm.' 'Enter, my children,' replied the anchorite, after having observed me attentively; 'this hermitage is at your service; and you may stay in it as long as you please. As for your horse,' added he, pointing to the fore-part of his habitation, 'he will be very well accommodated in that place.' The gentleman who accompanied me disposed of his beast accordingly, and then we followed the old man into the grotto, which as soon as we had entered, a great shower fell, mingled with flashes of lightning, and dreadful peals of thunder. The hermit fell on his knees before an image of St. Pacomo,* which was glued to the

* St. Pacomo was an Egyptian, whose faith was said to have been so effectual, that he walked among serpents unhurt; and that when he had occasion to cross the river Nile,

wall, and we followed his example. Meanwhile, the thunder ceased, and we got up; but as the rain continued, and the day was far spent, 'My children,' said the old man, 'I would not advise you to proceed on your journey in such weather, unless you have some pressing affair.' The young man and I replied, that we had none that hindered us from halting; and that if we were not afraid of incommoding him, we would beg leave to pass the night in his hermitage. 'You wont incommode me in the least,' said the hermit; 'but you will have reason to complain of your lodging; for you must lie hard, and I have nothing to offer you but anchorite's fare.'

So saying, the holy man made us sit down at a small table, and presenting us with a few onions, a crust of bread, and a pitcher of water, 'My sons,' said he, 'you see my usual repast; but to-day I will commit an excess, out of regard to you.' He then brought a little cheese, with two handfuls of filberts, and spread them upon the table. The young man, who had no great appetite, did not much honour to the feast: upon which the hermit observed to him, 'I perceive that you are accustomed to better tables than mine, or rather, that sensuality has corrupted your natural taste. I have been in the world, as you are now; the most delicate viands, the most exquisite ragouts, were not too good for my palate; but since I have lived in solitude, I have retrieved the former purity of my taste, and at present can relish nothing but roots, fruits, milk —in a word, that which composed the nourishment of our first parents.'

he was transported from one side to the other on the back of a crocodile.

While he spoke in this manner, the young man sunk into a profound reverie: which the hermit perceiving, 'My son,' said he to him, 'you have an oppression on your spirits; may I not know the cause? Unbosom yourself to me. It is not curiosity, but charity alone, that animates my request, I am of age to give advice; and perhaps your situation requires it.' 'Yes, father,' replied the cavalier, with a sigh; 'I have, doubtless, occasion for advice; and I will follow yours, since you are so good as to offer it. I believe I run no risk in discovering myself to a man of your character.' 'No,' my son,' said the senior; 'you have nothing to fear on that score, and may safely trust me with any secret.' In this confidence, the cavalier spoke as follows:

CHAPTER X.

The Story of Don Alphonso and the fair Seraphina

'I WILL conceal nothing from you, father, nor from the other gentleman who hears me; for, after the generosity he showed, I should be to blame to distrust him. Listen, therefore, to my misfortunes. I was born in Madrid, and my origin is this: an officer of the German guards, called the Baron de Steinbach, going home one evening, perceived a bundle of white linen at the foot of the staircase. He took it up, and carried it to his wife's apartment, where he found it to be a new-born infant, wrapped in very handsome swaddling-clothes, with a billet,

importing, that it belonged to persons of quality, who would one day make themselves known; and that it had been baptized by the name of Alphonso. I am that unhappy infant, and this is all I know of my birth and parentage: sacrificed to honour or infidelity, I know not whether my mother exposed me, in order to conceal a dishonourable flame; or, seduced by a perjured lover, found herself under the cruel necessity of disowning the fruit of her womb.

'Be that as it will, the baron and the lady were touched with my situation; and, as they had no children of their own, determined to educate me under the name of Don Alphonso. As I advanced in years, their attachment to me increased; my flattering and complaisant behaviour attracted their caresses every moment; in a word, I had the good fortune to make myself beloved: they gave me all kinds of masters; my education became their only study; and, far from expecting impatiently that my parents would discover themselves, they seemed, on the contrary, to wish that my birth would always remain a secret. As soon as the baron found me able to carry arms, he entered me in the service; procured for me an ensign's commission; ordered my small equipage to be got ready; and, to animate me the more to seek occasions of acquiring glory, he represented to me that the career of honour was open to every body, and that in war I might obtain a name the more glorious, as I should owe it to myself alone. At the same time, he revealed the secret of my birth, which he had hitherto concealed from my knowledge. As I passed for his son in Madrid, and effectually believed myself to be so, I own this piece of in

formation gave me a good deal of pain: I could not then, nor cannot now, think of it without shame; for the more my sentiments seemed to argue me of a noble origin, the greater my confusion was, to see myself abandoned by those who gave me being.

'I went to serve in the Low Countries; but the peace being concluded soon after, and Spain rid of her enemies, though not of those who envied her prosperity, I returned to Madrid, where I received fresh marks of tenderness from the baron and his lady. About two months after my return, a little page came into my room one morning; and presented to me a billet, conceived pretty nearly in these words:

"I AM neither ugly nor ill-shaped; and yet you see me frequently at the window, without paying me homage with your eyes. This behaviour but ill answers your gallant appearance; and piques me so much, that I wish I could inspire you with love, to be revenged on your indifference."

'Having read this billet, I did not doubt that it came from a widow, called Leonora, who lived opposite to our house, and had the reputation of being very coquettish. I interrogated the page, who was on the reserve at first, but in consideration of a ducat, which I slipped into his hand, he satisfied my curiosity; and even undertook to carry an answer, by which I informed his mistress, that I acknowledged my crime, and was already sensible of her being more than half revenged.

"I was not at all insensible of this kind of conquest: I kept the house all that day, and took great care to be always at the window, that I might observe the lady, who did not forget to show herself at hers. I made love to her in dumb show; she answered my signals, and next morning let me know by her page, that if I would be in the street betwixt eleven and twelve at night, I might converse with her at a parlour window. Though I did not find myself very much in love with such a forward widow, I did not fail to return a very passionate answer, and to wait for night with as much impatience as if I had been violently smitten. In the evening, I went out to walk in the Prado till the hour of assignation; and was no sooner arrived at that place, than a man, mounted on a fine horse, alighted hard by me, and accosting me hastily, said, "Are not you the son of Baron Steinbach?" When I replied in the affirmative, "You are the person," said he, "who intends to converse with Leonora at her window. Her page has shown me her letters, and your answers, and I have followed you this evening, from your own house hither, to let you know that you have a rival, whose pride is very much mortified in being obliged to dispute a heart with such a one as you. I believe I need say no more; we are now in a private place. Let us draw, therefore, unless, to avoid the chastisement I prepare for you, you will promise to break off all correspondence with Leonora. You must either sacrifice to me the hopes you have conceived, or forfeit your life immediately." "You ought then," said I to him, "to have requested,

not demanded, that sacrifice; I might, perhaps, have granted it to your entreaty, but I refuse it to your threats."

"It is very well!" he replied, after having tied his horse to a tree; "draw then! It does not become a person of my quality to stoop so low as to entreat a man of your station; most people of my rank, in the same case, would have revenged themselves in a less honourable way." I was shocked with these last words, and seeing his sword already unsheathed, drew mine also: we attacked one another with such fury, that the combat did not last long; whether he acted with too much heat, or I had more skill, I know not; but I gave him a mortal thrust, upon which I saw him stagger and fall. Whereupon, attending to my own safety only, I mounted his horse, and took the road to Toledo. I durst not return to the baron's house, being well assured that my adventure would very much afflict him; and when I considered the danger in which I was, I thought I could not get out of Madrid too soon.

'In the midst of the most melancholy reflections I rode the remaining part of the night, and all the morning; but toward noon, was obliged to halt, in order to give my horse some rest, and avoid the heat of the day, which grew insupportable. I tarried, therefore, in a village, till sun-set, after which I continued my journey, resolving to make but one stage to Toledo. I had got two leagues beyond Illescas, when, toward midnight, I was surprised in the middle of a field, with just such another storm as fell to-day; upon which I drew near the wall of a garden that I perceived at the distance of a few paces; and not finding a more convenient shelter, stood

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with my horse as close as I could to the door of a summer-house, situated at the end of the wall, over which there was a balcony. As I leaned against the door, I perceived it open, which I ascribed to the negligence of servants; and alighting, less out of curiosity than for the sake of being better screened from the rain, which did not cease to incommode me while I remained under the balcony, I entered the ground-floor of the summer-house, with my horse, which I led by the bridle.

'I employed myself, during the tempest, in observing the place; and though I could distinguish nothing but by the lightning that flashed around, it was easy to perceive, that the house could not belong to a vulgar owner. I expected still that the rain would cease, intending to proceed on my journey; but a great light that I observed at a distance, made me change my resolution. Leaving my horse in the summer-house, the door of which I took care to secure, I advanced toward the light, persuaded that there was still somebody in the house, not yet gone to bed, and resolved to request lodging for that night. Having crossed several walks, I arrived at a saloon, the door of which I found open also: I entered it, and when I had observed all the magnificence of the place, by the light of a fine crystal branch, I no longer doubted that I was in the house of some rich nobleman. The pavement was of marble; the wainscot very handsome, and curiously gilt; the cornices of admirable workmanship; and the ceiling painted by the most skilful masters: but what I took particular notice of, was an infinite number of busts of Spanish heroes, supported

on pedestals of jasper, all around the saloon. I had leisure enough to consider all these things; for though I listened attentively, from time to time, I neither heard the least noise, nor saw a living creature appear.

'There being on one side of the room a door unbolted, I half opened it, and perceived a range of rooms, the last of which only was lighted. "What shall I do?" said I to myself; "shall I return, or boldly penetrate to that room?" I concluded that the most judicious step would be, to return as I came. But I could not resist my curiosity, or rather the force of destiny that dragged me along: I advanced from one room to another, until I arrived at that in which was the light; that is, a taper burning on a marble table, in a silver candlestick gilt. I at first observed very handsome and gay summer furniture; but in a little time, casting my eyes upon a bed, the curtains of which were half drawn on account of the heat, I saw an object which attracted my whole attention. This was a young lady, who, notwithstanding the noise of the thunder, lay in a profound sleep. I approached her softly, and, by the light of the taper, discovered a complexion and features that quite dazzled me. My heart took the alarm at the sight! I felt my soul smitten and transported; but whatever emotions agitated my breast, the opinion I had of her high rank, hindered me from entertaining the least rash thought, and respect prevailed over inclination.

'While I glutted myself with the pleasure of contemplating her beauty, she awoke; and you may guess what was her surprise, when she saw a man, whom she did not know, in her bed-

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chamber at midnight. She trembled when she perceived me, and shrieked aloud; while I endeavoured to remove her fear, by kneeling before her, and saying, "Madam, be not afraid; I come not hither to do you the least injury." I was going on, but her consternation was such that she did not hear me. She called her women several times, but nobody answering, she put on a thin night-gown which lay at the bed's feet, got up hastily, and went into the rooms that I had crossed, still calling her maids, and a younger sister who lived under her care. I expected to see all her servants appear, and had reason to apprehend that, without being heard, I should meet with very disagreeable treatment: but, luckily for me, she called to no purpose; nobody came but an old domestic, who could not have given her much assistance, had she had any thing to fear. Nevertheless, growing more resolute by his presence, she asked, with a haughty air, who I was, and how, and for what reason, I had the boldness to enter her house. I then began to justify myself; and had no sooner told her that I found the door of the summer-house open, than she exclaimed, "Just Heaven! what do I presage!"

'So saying, she seized the light, and searching all the rooms, one after another, could see neither her maids nor her sister, but even observed that they had carried off all their baggage. Her suspicions appearing now but too plain, she returned to me, and said, with a great deal of emotion, "Perfidious wretch! add not dissimulation to treachery. It was not chance that brought thee here. Thou art one of the followers of Don Fernando de Leyva, and an associate in his crime:

but do not think to escape; I have still people enough to secure thee!" "Madam," answered I, "do not confound me with your enemies. I know no such person as Don Fernando de Leyva, and am even ignorant of your name and quality. I am an unfortunate man, whom an affair of honour hath obliged to leave Madrid; and I swear, by all that is sacred, I would not have entered your house, had it not been for the storm that surprised me! Judge, therefore, more favourably of me; and, instead of believing me an accomplice in the outrage you have suffered, think me rather disposed to revenge it." These last words, and the tone with which they were pronounced, appeased the lady, who seemed to look upon me no longer as her enemy: but if her indignation vanished, it was only to make room for her grief. She wept bitterly; I was melted by her tears, and no less afflicted than she, although I did not know the cause of her sorrow. I not only wept with her; but, impatient to revenge her wrongs, was seized with a transport of fury: "Madam," cried I, "what injury have you received? Speak; I espouse your resentment. Shall I pursue Don Fernando, and stab him to the heart? Name all those whom you would have sacrificed. Command my service. Whatever dangers, whatever misfortunes may be attached to your vengeance, that stranger whom you thought confederate with your enemies, will tempt them all for your sake!"

'This transport surprised the lady, and stopped the course of her tears: "Ah, sir!" said she, "pardon my suspicion, on account of the cruel situation in which I am. These generous senti-

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ments have undeceived Seraphina, and even freed me from the shame of seeing a stranger witness to the affront put upon my family. Yes, generous unknown! I acknowledge my error, and am far from rejecting your assistance; but I ask not the death of Don Fernando." "Well, madam," I replied, "what services can you expect of me?" "Sir," answered Seraphina, "the cause of my complaint is this: Don Fernando de Leyva is in love with my sister Julia, whom he saw by accident at Toledo, where we usually live. Three months ago, he asked her in marriage of the Count de Polan, my father, who refused his consent, on account of an old enmity subsisting between our families. My sister, not yet fifteen years of age, must have been weak enough to follow the advice of my women, whom Don Fernando has, doubtless, bribed to his interest; and he, informed of our being by ourselves in this country-house, has taken this opportunity of carrying her off. I want, therefore, to know what retreat he has chosen for her, that my father and brother, who have been at Madrid these two months, may take their measures accordingly. In the name of God!" added she, "give yourself the trouble of traversing the neighbourhood of Toledo, and of making an exact inquiry about the ravisher; my family will be eternally indebted to you for the favour."

'The lady did not consider, that the employment which she prescribed for me but ill agreed with the circumstances of a man who could not get out of Castile too soon. But how was it possible for her to make this reflection, which did not even occur to me! Charmed with the

happiness of finding myself necessary to the most amiable person in the world, I accepted the commission with a transport of joy, and promised to acquit myself with equal diligence and zeal. In effect, I did not wait for day, in order to go and accomplish my promise; but quitted Seraphina on the instant, conjuring her to pardon me for the fright I had occasioned, and assuring her, that she should hear news of me in a very little time. I went out as I had come in, but so much engrossed by the lady, that it was not difficult for me to perceive I was already captivated by her beauty: I was the more confirmed of this, by the eagerness I felt in serving her, and the amorous chimeras which my imagination produced. I fancied that Seraphina, although possessed by her sorrow, had observed my growing passion, and beheld it perhaps not without some pleasure: I even imagined, that if I could bring her any news of her sister, and the affair should turn out according to her wish, the whole would redound to my honour.'

Don Alphonso, interrupting the thread of his story, in this place, said to the old hermit, 'I beg pardon, father, if, too full of my passion, I enlarge upon circumstances which are doubtless tedious to you.' 'No, my son,' replied the anchorite; 'they are far from being tedious: I am even pleased to know how far you are smitten by this young lady of whom you talk, that I may regulate my advice accordingly.'

'My imagination heated with these flattering ideas,' resumed the young man; 'I searched two days for Julia's ravisher: but it was to no purpose for me to make all imaginable inquiry; I could not discover the least traces of him. Very

much mortified at having reaped no fruit from my researches, I returned to Seraphina, whom I expected to find in the utmost anxiety: but she was much more tranquil than I imagined, and informed me that she had been more lucky than I; that she knew what was become of her sister, having received a letter from Don Fernando himself; importing, that being privately married to Julia, he had placed her in a convent at Toledo. "I have sent this letter to my father," added Seraphina; "I hope the affair will terminate in an amicable manner, and that a solemn marriage will, in a short time, extinguish the hatred which has so long divided our families."

'When the lady had made me acquainted with her sister's fate, she made an apology for the trouble she had given me, and the danger to which she might have imprudently exposed me, by engaging me to pursue a ravisher, without remembering I had told her I was obliged to fly on account of an affair of honour: she excused herself, therefore, in the most obliging terms; and, as I had need of rest, carried me into the saloon, where we sat down together. She wore a loose gown of white taffety, with black stripes, and a little hat of the same stuff, with a black plume of feathers, which made me guess that she was a widow; though she appeared so young, that I did not know what to think of her condition.

'If I longed for an explanation on this head, she was no less desirous of knowing who I was; and accordingly begged that I would tell her my name, not doubting (as she said) that by my noble air, and still more, the generous pity that made me enter so warmly into her interests, I belonged

to some considerable family. The question embarrassed me not a little; I blushed; was confounded; and own, that being less ashamed to lie than tell the truth, I answered, I was the son of the Baron de Steinbach, an officer of the German guards. "Tell me likewise," replied the lady, "for what reason you quitted Madrid? I offer you, beforehand, all the credit of my father, as well as of my brother Don Gaspard; that is the least mark of gratitude I can show, to a gentleman who neglected the care of his own life to serve me." I made no difficulty of recounting to her all the circumstances of my duel: upon which she blamed the gentleman whom I had slain, and promised to interest her whole family in my favour.

'When I had satisfied her curiosity, I begged her to gratify mine; and asked her whether her faith was free or plighted. "Three years ago," she replied, "my father obliged me to marry Don Diego de Lara, and I have been a widow fifteen months." "Madam," said I, "what misfortune has deprived you of your husband so soon?" "I will tell you, sir," resumed the lady, "in return for the confidence you have reposed in me.

"Don Diego de Lara was a very genteel cavalier, who entertained the most violent passion for me; and, in order to please me, put in practice, every day, all that the most tender and passionate lover could invent, to make himself agreeable to the object of his flame; but though he possessed a thousand good qualities, he could never touch my heart. Love is not always the effect of assiduities and distinguished merit. Alas!" added she, "an utter stranger often

enchants us at first sight. Well, it was not in my power to love him: more confounded than charmed with the tokens of his tenderness, to which I was forced to make returns without inclination; though I, in secret, taxed myself with ingratitude, I likewise found my own situation very unhappy. Unluckily for him, as well as me, his delicacy was still greater than his love. He discovered in my actions and discourse the most secret emotions of my breast, and dived to the very bottom of my soul. He complained incessantly of my indifference, and deemed himself the more unhappy in being unable to please me; because he very well knew that there was no rival in his way; for I was scarce sixteen years old, and before he offered me his hand, he had gained over all my women, who assured him that no man had as yet attracted my regard. "Yes, Seraphina," he would often say, "I wish you had been prepossessed in favour of another, and that alone were the cause of your indifference to me: my assiduities, and your own virtue, would triumph over that prejudice; but I despair of making a conquest of your heart, since it remains untouched by all the love I have shown." Tired with hearing him repeat the same discourse, I told him, that instead of troubling his repose and mine by too much delicacy, he would do well to leave his grievances to time. And truly, one of my age was not capable of relishing the confinements of such a delicate passion; so that Don Diego ought to have taken my advice: but seeing a whole year elapsed, without his being further advanced than the first day, he lost his patience, or rather his reason; and pretending to have an affair of consequence at court, departed

to serve as a volunteer in the Low Countries, where he soon found in battle, that which he went to seek; I mean, the end of his torments and life."

'After the lady had favoured me with this relation, the singular character of her husband became the subject of our discourse; in which we were interrupted by the arrival of a courier, who delivered to Seraphina a letter from the Count de Polan. She asked my permission to read it; and I observed, that while she perused it, she grew pale and trembled. After having read it, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, heaved a profound sigh, and her face was in a moment covered with tears. I could not behold her grief with tranquillity: I was greatly disturbed; and, as if I had presaged the cruel stroke I was to suffer, felt myself chilled with a mortal fear. "Madam," said I, with a faltering voice, "may I ask what are the fatal contents of that letter?" "There, sir," replied Seraphina in a melancholy manner, giving me the paper, "read yourself what my father writes. Alas! you are but too much concerned."

'I was confounded at her words: and, trembling while I took the letter, read:

"YOUR brother Don Gaspard fought yesterday in the Prado,* where he received a mortal thrust, of which he died this day; having declared, in his last moments, that the person who killed him is the son of Baron de Steinbach, an officer of the German guards. What adds to the misfortune is, that the murderer has escaped me by flight: but wheresoever he conceals himself, I

* The public walk at Madrid, as the Park is at London.

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shall spare no pains to find him out; for which purpose I will write to some governors, who will not fail to apprehend him, if he passes through the towns of their jurisdiction; and by letters directed to other people, I will cause all the roads to be blocked up.

"THE COUNT DE POLAN."

'You may easily conceive how all my faculties were disordered by this billet. I remained for some moments without motion or power of speech; and even in the midst of this depression, perceiving what a fatal obstruction the death of Don Gaspard would be to my love, was seized with the most violent despair! I threw myself at the feet of Seraphina, and presenting my naked sword, "Madam," said I, "spare the Count de Polan the trouble of finding out a man, who might conceal himself from his resentment. Revenge your brother, by sacrificing his murderer with your own hand. Strike, madam! and let the sword that deprived him of life, become fatal to his unfortunate adversary." "Sir," replied Seraphina, affected with my behaviour, "I loved Don Gaspard; therefore, although you killed him honourably, and he brought his misfortune upon himself, you may be assured I enter into the resentment of my father. Yes, Don Alphonso! I am your enemy, and will act against you every thing that the ties of blood and friendship can require: but I will not take the advantage of your bad fortune, which has put you in my power. The same honour that arms me against you, hinders me from taking a base revenge. The rights of hospitality ought to be inviolable, and therefore I will not repay the

service you have done me, with the conduct of an assassin. Fly, then! elude, if you can, our pursuit, and the rigour of the laws, and save your life from the danger that threatens it!"

"How, madam!" I replied, "when you can revenge yourself, do you leave it to the laws, which may perhaps balk your resentment? Ah! rather pierce the heart of a miserable wretch who does not deserve your forbearance! No, madam; do not honour me with such a noble and generous proceeding. You know not who I am: though I pass in Madrid for the son of the Baron de Steinbach, I am no other than an unfortunate foundling, whom he has brought up out of pure compassion; I do not even know the authors of my being." "No matter," said Seraphina, interrupting me with precipitation, as if my last words had given her new pain; "were you the lowest of mankind, I will do what honour prescribes." "Well, Madam," said I, "since the death of a brother cannot provoke you to shed my blood, I will incense you by a new crime; the audacity of which, I hope, you will not excuse. I adore you—I could not behold your charms without being dazzled with them; and, in spite of the obscurity of my fate, had entertained the hope of making you mine for ever. I was so much in love, or rather so vain, as to flatter myself that heaven, which perhaps favours me by keeping my origin concealed, would disclose it to me one day, when I should be able to tell you my name without a blush. After this confession, which injures you so much, do you still hesitate in punishing me?" "This rash declaration," replied the lady, "would doubtless offend me at another time, but I pardon it, in considera-

tion of your present agitation: besides, my own anxiety will not permit me to attend to such discourse. Once more, Don Alphonso," added she, shedding some tears, "leave this place; fly from a house you have filled with sorrow; for every moment you stay increases my affliction!" "Madam, I will no longer resist," said I, rising; "I must banish myself from you; but think not that, studious of preserving a life which is odious to you, I will go and seek an asylum where I can be secure. No, no! I devote myself to your resentment. I will go to Toledo; wait with impatience for the fate of your decree; and, exposing myself to your pursuit, advance willingly toward the end of my misfortunes."

'So saying, I withdrew: my horse was brought out for me, and I repaired to Toledo,* where I staid a whole week; and, truly, was at so little pains to conceal myself, that I don't know how I escaped being taken; for I cannot believe that the Count de Polan, whose chief care was to shut up all the passages against me, would imagine that I could not pass through Toledo. In fine, I yesterday left that city, where I seemed to be tired of liberty; and without keeping any certain road, am come to this hermitage, like a man who has nothing to fear. You see, father, what en-

* Toledo is the capital of New Castile, and was anciently the royal seat of the Goths and Moors. It stands on a steep craggy rock, encompassed by the Tagus, over which are two noble bridges. It is an archiepiscopal see, and the revenue so considerable, that the Queen of Spain obtained it from the Pope for one of her sons, though a minor. The lands for the repairs of the church, are said to be of the annual value of 300,000 ducats, and for the dignitaries and canons 200,000 more. The archbishop is Great Chancellor of Castile, has a diocese of 802 parishes, to which belong seventeen towns, besides a great many villages.

grosses my thoughts, and I crave the assistance of your advice.'

CHAPTER XI.

The old Hermit discovers himself, and Gil Blas perceives that he is among his acquaintance.

Alphonso having ended the melancholy narration of his misfortunes, the old hermit said to him, 'Son, you have been very imprudent in staying so long at Toledo. I look upon all you have recounted in a light very different from that in which you see it; and your passion for Seraphina is, in my opinion, pure madness. Believe me, you must forget that young lady, who cannot possibly be yours. Yield, therefore, with a good grace, to the obstacles which separate you from her; and follow your destiny, which in all likelihood will be productive of many other adventures. You will, questionless, find some other young lady, who will make the same impression upon your heart, and whose brother you have not slain.'

He was going to add a great many other things in order to induce Don Alphonso to have patience, when he saw another hermit, loaded with a wallet, well stuffed, enter the hermitage. He was come from the town of Cuenca, where he had made a very successful gathering; seemed younger than his companion, and wore a red bushy beard. 'Welcome, brother Antonio,' said the old anchorite to him; 'what news from town?' 'Bad enough,' answered the red-haired

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brother, putting a letter in his hand; 'that billet will inform you.' The senior, having opened and read it with suitable attention, cried, 'God be praised! since the plot is discovered, we must regulate our conduct accordingly. Let us change our style,' added he. 'Signior Don Alphonso, you see a man exposed, like yourself to the caprice of fortune. I am informed from Cuenca, which is a town about a league from this, that somebody has done me an ill office with justice; all the agents of which are to set out to-morrow for this hermitage, in order to secure my person; but they shan't find the hare in the gin. This is not the first time that I have been in such dilemmas. Thank God, I have almost always extricated myself in another shape! for such as you see me, I am neither an old man nor a hermit.'

So saying, he stripped himself of a long robe which he wore, and appeared in a doublet of black serge with slashed sleeves. Then he pulled off his cap, untied a string that supported his false beard, and, all of a sudden, assumed the figure of a man between twenty and thirty years of age. Brother Anthony by his example, quitted his hermit's habit, rid himself of his red beard in the same manner as his companion had done, and took out of an old worm-eaten coffer a shabby short cassock, with which he clothed himself. But you may guess my surprise, when, in the person of the old anchorite, I recollected Signior Don Raphael; and in that of brother Anthony, my most dear and faithful valet, Ambrose de Lamela. 'Good God!' cried I, immediately; 'I find I am among my acquaintance here.' 'True, Signior Gil Blas,' said

Raphael, smiling, 'you have found two of your friends when you least expected it. I confess, you have some reason to complain of us; but let us forget what is past, and thank heaven for our meeting again. Ambrose and I make a tender of our services; and I can tell you they are not to be despised. You must not think us the worst of mankind; we neither assault nor assassinate: we seek only to live at the expense of our neighbours; and if theft be a crime, necessity excuses the injustice. Associate with us, and lead a rambling life, which is extremely agreeable, when conducted with prudence; not but, with all our sagacity, the chain of second causes is some times such, that we meet with unlucky adventures. What then! we enjoy the good with the better relish, on that very account. We are hardened against inconstant weather, and accustomed to the vicissitudes of fortune.

'Signior Cavalier,' added the false hermit, speaking to Don Alphonso, 'we make the same proposal to you; which, considering your present situation, I think you ought not to reject; for, not to mention the affair that obliges you to conceal yourself, you must certainly be in want of money.' 'Yes, truly,' said Don Alphonso; 'and that, I own, increases my chagrin.' 'Well, then,' replied Raphael, 'don't leave us; you cannot do better than to join your fortune to ours: you shall want nothing; and we will baffle all the search of your enemies. We know almost every inch of Spain, having travelled over it, and are acquainted with the woods, mountains, and every place proper for an asylum against the brutality of justice.' Don Alphonso thanked them for their good will, and being actually

without money or resource, resolved to bear them company. I came to the same determination, because I would not leave the young gentleman, for whom I felt a growing friendship.

Having agreed to go all together, we began to deliberate whether we should set out that instant, or first of all give some assaults to a full bottle of excellent wine, which brother Anthony, the day before, had brought from Cuenca: but Raphael, as a man of the greatest experience among us, represented that, before every thing else, we must think of our safety. He was of opinion, therefore, that we should march all night, in order to gain a very thick wood between Villardesa and Almodabar, in which we should halt, and, being perfectly secure, spend the day in taking our repose. This advice being approved, the false hermits made two bundles of their baggage and provisions, and laid them in equilibrio, on Don Alphonso's horse. This was done with great expedition; after which we quitted the hermitage, leaving as a prey to justice the two hermit-robes, with the white and red beards, two pallets, a table, a rotten chest, two old straw-bottomed chairs, and the image of St. Pacomo.

We walked all night, and began to feel ourselves very much fatigued, when at day-break we perceived the wood to which we were bound. The sight of a port gives new vigour to sailors tired with a long voyage. We accordingly took courage, and at last arrived at the end of our journey before sun-rise. Penetrating into the thickest part of the wood, we stopped at a very agreeable spot upon a small glade, surrounded with a good many tall oaks; the branches of

which meeting, formed an umbrageous arch, impervious to the heat of the day. Here we unbridled the horse to let him feed, (after we had unloaded him) and sitting down together, took out of brother Anthony's wallet some large pieces of bread, with a good many slices of roasted meat, and began to attack them as if for a wager. Nevertheless, in spite of our appetites, we often left off eating to embrace the bottle, which incessantly circulated, passing from the clasp of one into the embraces of another.

Toward the end of the repast, Don Raphael said to Don Alphonso, 'Signior Cavalier, after the confidence you have honoured me with, it is but just that I recount to you the history of my life with the same sincerity.' 'It will give me great pleasure,' replied the young man. 'And me in particular, cried I; 'for I have an extreme curiosity to hear your adventures, which are doubtless well worth our attention.' 'That I'll answer for,' replied Raphael; 'and I intend to commit them to writing one day. That shall be the amusement of my old age; for I am still young, and would have the volume enlarged. But at present we are fatigued. Let us refresh ourselves with a few hours of sleep: while we three enjoy our rest, Ambrose will watch against all surprise, and then sleep in his turn. Though I believe we are very safe in this place, it is always good to be upon our guard.' So saying, he stretched himself upon the grass, Don Alphonso did the same, I followed their example, and Lamela stood sentry.

Don Alphonso, instead of taking some repose, kept himself awake with reflecting upon his

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misfortunes; and I could not close an eye. As for Don Raphael, he soon fell asleep; but awaking an hour after, and seeing us disposed to listen, he said to Lamela, 'Friend Ambrose, thou mayest now take a comfortable nap.' 'No, no,' replied Lamela; 'I have no inclination to sleep; and though I am well acquainted with all the passages of your life, they are so instructive to people of our profession, that I shall be very well entertained in hearing them recounted once more.' Don Raphael immediately began the history of his life in these terms.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

The History of Don Raphael.

I AM the son of an actress at Madrid, whose name was Lucinda, famous for her theatrical talents, and still more for her gallantry. As for my father, I cannot, without presumption, assume any one in particular. It is true, I might tell what man of quality was in love with my mother when I came into the world; but that epocha would by no means be a convincing proof of his being the author of my birth. A woman of my mother's profession is so little to be trusted, that even while she appears the most attached to one nobleman, she almost always substitutes in his place some other person for his money.

'There is nothing like putting one's self above scandal: Lucinda, instead of bringing me up in obscurity at her own house, took me by the hand, without ceremony, and carried me to the theatre in a very honourable manner, without giving herself any trouble about the discourse that passed at her expense, or the malicious sneers that the sight of me never failed to excite. In a word, I was her darling, and caressed by all the men that visited her, so much, that it looked as if nature pleaded with them in my behalf.

I was allowed to pass the twelve first years of my life in all sorts of frivolous amusements: scarce was I taught to read and write; and still less pains were taken to initiate me in the principles of my religion; I learned only to dance, sing, and play on the guitar. This was all I could do, when the Marquis de Leganez asked me as a companion to his only son, who was pretty much of my age. Lucinda willingly complied with his request, and it was then I began to think seriously. Young Leganez was not further advanced than I: that little nobleman did not seem qualified by Nature for the sciences. He hardly knew one letter of his alphabet, although he had been under the instruction of a preceptor fifteen months. His other masters succeeded no better: he exhausted their patience. They were not, indeed, permitted to use rigour; but expressly ordered to instruct, without tormenting him; and that order, joined to his natural dullness, rendered all their lessons of little or no effect.

'But the preceptor invented an excellent expedient to intimidate the young nobleman, without contradicting his father's order: he resolved to flog me when his pupil deserved punishment; and he did not fail to put his resolution in practice. Not relishing this expedient, I ran away, and complained to my mother of such unjust treatment: but, in spite of all her tenderness for me, she had strength enough to resist my tears, and considering that it was a great advantage for her son to live with the Marquis de Leganez, sent me back immediately. I was now abandoned to the preceptor; who, perceiving that his invention had produced a good effect, continued

to flog me still, instead of the young nobleman; and, in order to make the deeper impression upon him, disciplined me with great severity. I was sure to pay, every day, for young Leganez; and I may venture to affirm, that he did not learn one letter of his alphabet, which did not cost me a hundred lashes. Judge you what his rudiments stood me in.

'The birch was not the only disagreeable thing I suffered in this house: as every body knew me, the meanest servant, even the scullions, reproached me with my birth. This disgusted me so much, that I ran away one day, after having found means to seize the preceptor's whole stock of ready money, which might amount to a hundred and fifty ducats. Such was the vengeance I took for the stripes he had so unjustly bestowed upon me. I performed this sleight of hand with admirable dexterity, though it was my first essay; and having had the address to baffle the search that was made for me during two days, left Madrid, and repaired to Toledo, without being pursued.

'I was then just going into my fifteenth year. What a pleasure it was to be independent at that age, and entirely master of my own actions! I soon contracted acquaintance with young people, who polished me up, and assisted me to spend my ducats: I associated with knights of the post, who cultivated my happy disposition so well, that in a little time I became one of the most dexterous of the order. At the end of five years, being seized with an inclination to travel, I quitted my confederates, and beginning my peregrinations by Estramadura, went as far as Alcantara: but before I reached that place, find-

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ing an opportunity of exerting my talents, I did not let it escape. Being a-foot, and moreover loaded with a pretty heavy knapsack, I frequently halted to repose myself under the trees, that offered me their shade, at a little distance from the highway. In one of those resting-places I found two lads very well dressed, talking merrily on the grass, while they enjoyed the coolness of the shade. I saluted them very courteously, and entered into conversation with them, at which they did not seem displeased. The eldest was not more than fifteen, and they both seemed to be extremely raw. "Signior Cavalier," said the youngest to me, "we are sons of two rich citizens of Placentia, who longing extremely to see the kingdom of Portugal, in order to satisfy our curiosity, have taken a hundred pistoles each from our parents; and as we travel a-foot, hope to go a great way with that sum. What is your opinion of the matter?" "If I had so much," I replied, "God knows where I should go: I would visit the four corners of the world. What the devil! two hundred pistoles! it is an immense sum, and you'll never see the end of it. If it be agreeable to you, gentlemen," added I, "I shall have the honour of accompanying you as far as the city of Almeria, where I am going to take possession of an estate of an uncle, who has been settled in that place twenty years, or thereabouts."

'The young citizens assured me they would be glad of my company. Whereupon, having rested ourselves a little, we set forwards, all together, toward Alcantara, where we arrived a good while before night, and went to lodge at a good inn. We asked for a room, and were

shown into one, where there was a press with a key in it. Having bespoke supper, I proposed to my comrades that we should go and see the town while it was getting ready. They accepted the proposal; we locked our knapsacks in the press, the key of which one of the citizens put in his pocket; and going out of the inn, went to view the churches. While we were in the cathedral, I pretended, all of a sudden, to have an affair of consequence in hand, and said to my companions, "Gentlemen, I have just recollected that a person of Toledo desired me to deliver a short message to a merchant who lives near this church. Pray wait for me here, and I'll be back in an instant." So saying, I left them, ran to the inn, flew to the press, forced the lock, and rumaging the knapsacks of my young cits, found their pistoles. Poor children! I did not leave them so much as one to pay for their night's lodging. I carried all off, quitted the town as fast as possible, and took the road to Merida, without giving myself any further concern about them.

'That adventure put me in a condition to travel agreeably: though I was young, I found myself capable of conducting myself with prudence; and I may say, I was pretty old, considering my years. Having resolved to buy a mule, I put my resolution in practice at the next village. I even converted my knapsack into a portmanteau, and began to assume a little more of the man of consequence. On the third day, I met a man singing vespers as loud as he could roar, on the highway. Judging by his appearance, that he was a chanter, I accosted him with courage. "Signior Batchelor, you sing purely; your heart

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goes with your profession, I see!" "Sir," answered he, "I am a chanter, at your service; and amuse myself with clearing my pipes, as you hear."

'In this manner we entered into conversation, and I perceived that I had got into company with a most witty and agreeable fellow, about four or five-and-twenty years old. As he travelled on foot, I made my mule walk slowly, that I might have the pleasure of conversing with him; and, among other things, the discourse turned on Toledo. "I know that city perfectly well," said the chanter; "having lived a good while in it, and I believe have some friends there." "In what place," answered I, interrupting him, "did you live at Toledo?" He replied, "In the New Street. I lived with Don Vincent de Buena Garra, Don Matthias de Cordel, and two or three more gentlemen of honour. We lodged, ate, and passed our time agreeably together." These words surprised me; for it must be observed, that these gentlemen, whose names he mentioned, were the very sharpers with whom I had kept company at Toledo. "Signior Chanter," cried I, "those gentlemen, whom you have named, are of my acquaintance, and I lived with them in the New Street." "I understand you," he replied, smiling; "that is to say, you are entered into the company since I left it three years ago." "I have," said I, "quitted these gentlemen, because I was seized with an inclination to travel. I intend to make the tour of Spain, knowing that I shall improve by experience." "Without doubt," he replied, "one must travel before he have a finished education: it is for this reason that I left Toledo, where I lived very

agreeably. I thank heaven," added he, "for having met, when I least expected it, a knight of my own order! Let us join, travel together, make attempts on our neighbour's purse, and lay hold of every occasion that presents itself of exerting our skill."

'He made this proposal so frankly and with such a good grace, that I accepted it. He won my confidence all of a sudden, in bestowing his upon me, and we unbosomed ourselves to one another. I recounted my history to him, and he made no mystery of his adventures to me; letting me know that he was just come from Portalegro, whence an unsuccessful trick had obliged him to escape with precipitation, in the dress he now wore. After he had communicated to me his whole affairs, we resolved to go to Merida together, in order to try our fortune, by striking some lucky stroke, if possible; and then, immediately decamping, to remove elsewhere. From that moment our stock became common betwixt us; indeed, Moralez (so my companion was called) was not in a very brilliant situation. His whole fortune consisted of five or six ducats, with some baggage that he carried in a wallet; but if I was richer than he in ready money, he, on the other hand, was more consummate than I in the art of deceiving mankind.

'We mounted my mule by turns, and in this manner arriving at Merida, halted at an inn of the suburbs, where my comrade took out of his wallet a dress, in which he was no sooner clothed, than he went to take a turn through the town, reconnoitre the ground, and look for an opportunity of going to work. We considered every object that presented itself, with great attention,

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and, as Homer would have said, resembled two kites that cast their eyes abroad to look for birds on which to prey. In short, we waited, in hopes that chance would afford an occasion on which we might employ our industry, when we perceived in the street an old gray-haired gentleman fighting against three men, who pushed hard at him. I was shocked at the inequality of the combat; and, as I am naturally a tilter, flew to the assistance of the old man: Moralez following my example, we attacked the gentleman's three enemies, and obliged them to seek their safety in flight.

'The senior was mighty thankful. "We are very glad," said I to him, "that we happened to be here so seasonably, to give you assistance; but let us know, at least, who we have had the good fortune to serve; and pray tell us, for what reason those three men would have assassinated you." "Gentlemen," he replied, "I am too much obliged, to refuse the satisfaction you desire. My name is Jerome de Moyadas, and I live on my fortune in this city: one of those assassins, from whom you have delivered me, made love to my daughter, asked her of me in marriage some days ago, and, as he could not obtain my consent, attacked me, sword in hand, in order to be revenged." "And may one ask," I replied, "your reason for refusing your consent to that gentleman?" "I will tell you," said he: "I had a brother, a merchant in this city, whose name was Augustin. Two months ago he was at Calatrava, and lodged at the house of Juan Velez de Menbrilla, his correspondent, with whom he was so intimate, that, in order to strengthen their friendship still more, he promised my only

daughter Florentina in marriage to his son, not doubting that he had credit enough with me to perform his promise. Accordingly, my brother, upon his return to Merida, no sooner mentioned the affair, than I, out of love to him, consented to the marriage. He then sent Florentina's picture to Calatrava; but, alas! had not the satisfaction of finishing the work, for he died three weeks ago; conjuring me, on his death-bed, to dispose of my daughter to none but his correspondent's son. This I promised; and on his account, refused Florentina to the gentleman who assaulted me, although he is a very advantageous match. I am a slave to my word, and every moment expect the son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla, on whom I will bestow my daughter in marriage, though I never saw either him or his father. I beg pardon," continued Jerome de Moyadas, "for troubling you with this relation; but you yourself exacted it of me."

'I listened to him with great attention, and resolving upon a trick that struck me in the head of a sudden, affected great astonishment, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and turning towards the old man, said, in a pathetic tone, "Ah, Signior Moyadas! is it possible, that on my first arrival at Merida, I should be so happy as to save the life of my father-in-law!" The old citizen was strangely surprised at these words, as well as Moralez, who showed by his countenance, what a great rogue he took me to be. "What do I hear!" replied the senior. "How! are you the son of my brother's correspondent!" "Yes, Signior Jerome de Moyadas," answered I, with an audacious countenance, while I threw my arms about his neck; "I am that happy mortal,

for whom the adorable Florentina is destined. But before I express my joy in entering into your family, allow me to shed into your bosom the tears which the remembrance of your brother Augustin renews! I should be the most ungrateful of all mankind, if I was not sensibly touched with the death of a person to whom I owe all the happiness of my life!" So saying, I again embraced honest Jerome, and covered my eyes with my hand, on pretence of wiping away my tears. Moralez, who, in a twinkling, perceived the advantage we might reap from a trick of this kind, did not fail to second the imposture, and passing for my valet, even topped me in the sorrow I had manifested for the death of Signior Augustin. "Signior Jerome," cried he, "what a loss you have suffered in your brother's death! He was such an honest man! the very phœnix of commerce! a disinterested merchant; a merchant of integrity; there are few of his fellows to be met with!"

'We had to do with a simple and credulous man, who, so far from suspecting the cheat, was himself an assistant in it. "And why," said he, "did you not come straight to my house? You should not have gone to lodge at an inn. Considering the terms on which we are, no ceremony ought to have been observed." "Sir," answered Moralez, taking upon him to speak for me, "my master is, I grant you, a little ceremonious; not but that he is excusable in some shape, in being unwilling to appear before you in his present situation; for we have been robbed in our journey hither, and lost all our baggage." "The young man," said I, interrupting him, "tells you nothing but the truth.

Signior de Moyadas. This misfortune did not permit me to come to your house: I durst not present myself, in this garb, before the eyes of a mistress who has not as yet seen me; and, for that reason, I waited the return of a valet whom I have sent to Calatrava." "This accident," replied the old man, "ought not to have hindered you from coming to stay at my house, where I intend you shall immediately take up your lodging."

So saying, he carried me home with him; and, by the way, we talked of the pretended robbery that I had suffered; when I assured him, that what gave me the greatest concern, was my having lost, with my baggage, the picture of Florentina. Whereupon the citizen observed, with a smile, that I might console myself for that loss the more easily, as the original was better than the copy. In effect, as soon as we came to his house, he called his daughter, who was not above sixteen years of age, and might have been counted an accomplished young lady; saying to me, "You see the object which my late brother promised to you." "Ah, Signior," cried I, with a passionate air, "you have no occasion to tell me that this is the amiable Florentina! These charming features are engraved on my memory, and still more upon my heart. If the picture which I lost, and which was only a slight sketch of such perfection, could inflame me with the most ardent passion, judge how I must be transported at this moment!" "You flatter me too much," said Florentina, "for I am not vain enough to imagine that my qualifications justify your discourse."—"Go on with your compliments," said the father

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At the same time he left me alone with his daughter; and taking Moralez aside, "Friend," said he to him, "you have lost all your baggage, then; and, without doubt, your money too."— "Yes, sir," answered my comrade; "a great number of banditti poured upon us, near Castel Blazo, and left us nothing but the clothes on our backs; but we shall, in a very short time, receive bills of exchange, which will set all things to rights again."

"But until those bills arrive," replied the old man, taking a purse out of his pocket, "here are a hundred pistoles at your service." "O, sir!" said Moralez, "my master would not accept them for the world; I find you don't know him. Zooks! he is a man of great delicacy on these occasions. He is none of those fashionable youngsters who are apt to take up from every body. He does not love to be in debt, and would rather beg his bread than borrow one farthing." "So much the better," said the honest citizen; "I esteem him the more on that account. I cannot bear to see young men contract debts: I pardon it, indeed, in people of quality, because it is a privilege they have possessed a long time. I won't," continued he, "affront thy master; and since it will only give him pain to offer him money, we must say no more about it." With these words, he was going to put the purse in his pocket again; but my companion held his hand, saying, "Hold, Signior Moyadas; whatever aversion my master has to borrowing, I don't despair prevailing upon him to accept your hundred pistoles. It is only from strangers he is shy of borrowing: he is not so ceremonious with his own family; he can even

demand of his father, with a good grace, whatever money he has occasion for. The young gentleman, you perceive, knows how to distinguish persons, and ought to look upon you, sir, as a second father."

'Moralez, by such discourse, secured the purse of the old man, who came and rejoined us; and finding his daughter and me engaged in mutual compliments, interrupted our conversation, by telling Florentina the obligation he lay under to me; and, on that score, made me professions which convinced me of his gratitude. I laid hold of such a favourable disposition, and told the citizen, that the most sensible mark of acknowledgment he could show, would be to hasten my marriage with his daughter. He yielded, with a good grace, to my impatience; assuring me, that in three days at furthest, I should be Florentina's husband; and that, instead of six thousand ducats, which he had promised for her dower, he would give me ten, as a proof of his being deeply affected with the service I had done him.

'Moralez and I, therefore, lived with the honest man Jerome de Moyadas, kindly treated, and in the agreeable expectation of ten thousand ducats, with which we proposed to make a sudden decampment from Merida. Our joy, however, was checked by fear: we were apprehensive, that in less than three days the true son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla would arrive, and cross our good fortune.

'This fear was by no means ill-founded; for the very next day, a kind of peasant, loaded with a portmanteau, came to the house of Florentina's father, when I was not at home, though my com

sadle was present. "Sir," said the peasant to the old man, "I belong to a young gentleman of Calatrava, called Signior de la Menbrilla, who is to be your son-in-law. We are just arrived, and he will be here presently. I came before, to give you notice of his approach." He had scarce spoke these words, when his master appeared; a circumstance that surprised the old man very much, and disconcerted Moralez a little.

'Pedro, who was a very genteel young fellow, addressed himself to Florentina's father; but the honest citizen did not give him time to finish his discourse, and turning to my companion, asked the meaning of all this. Then Moralez, who was second to no man on earth in impudence, assumed an air of assurance, and said to the old man, "Sir, these two men belong to the troop of thieves who robbed us on the highway: I recollect them both very well, particularly him who has the audacity to call himself the son of Signior Juan Velez de la Menbrilla." The old citizen believed Moralez; and, persuaded that the strangers were cheats, said to them, "Gentlemen, you come too late; your scheme is prevented: Pedro de la Menbrilla has been in my house since yesterday." "Take care of what you say," answered the young man of Calatrava; "you have got an impostor in your family; for you must know that Juan Velez de Menbrilla has no other son than me." "I know better," replied the old man; "and am not ignorant of your profession: don't you recollect this young man, and remember his master whom you robbed?" "If I was not in your house," said Pedro, "I would punish the insolence of that

cheat, who has the presumption to call me a robber. Let him thank your presence, that restrains my indignation. Sir," added he, "you are imposed upon. I am the young man to whom your brother Augustin promised his niece. If you desire it, I can show all the letters which he wrote to my father, on the subject of the marriage. Will you not believe it, when you see the picture of Florentina, which he sent to me some time before his death?"

"No," said the old citizen, interrupting him; "neither the picture nor the letters will convince me: I know very well in what manner they fell into your hands; and I advise you, as a friend, to be gone from Merida as soon as you can." "This is too much," cried the young gentleman, in his turn; "I will not suffer my name to be stolen with impunity, nor myself to be treated like a highwayman. I know some people in this place, whom I will find, and return to confound the impostor that has prejudiced you against me." So saying, he retired with his valet, and Moralez remained master of the field: nay, this adventure made Jerome de Moyadas resolve to have the marriage celebrated that very day; and he went out instantly to give the necessary orders for the occasion.

'Though my comrade was very well pleased to see Florentina's father in a disposition so favourable for us, he was far from being perfectly at ease: fearing the consequence of the measures which he concluded Pedro would certainly take, he waited for me with impatience, to communicate what had happened. Finding him, at my return, plunged in a profound reverie, "What is the matter, friend?" said I, "thou seemest in

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a brown study." He replied, "If I am, it is not without reason:" and informed me of the whole affair; adding, "Thou seest what cause I have to muse. It was thou alone, who rashly threw us into this dilemma. It was a shining enterprise, I own, and would have crowned thee with glory, had it succeeded: but, to all appearance, it will end ill; and it is my advice, that, in order to prevent explanations, we immediately betake ourselves to our heels, with the feather which we have plucked from the honest man's wing."

"Mr. Moralez," answered I to this proposal, "you yield to difficulties, I find, very soon; and don't do a great deal of honour to Don Matthias de Cordel, and the other cavaliers with whom you lived at Toledo: one who has served his apprenticeship under such able masters, ought not to be easily alarmed. As for me, who intend to walk in the steps of these heroes, and prove myself a worthy pupil, I will bear up against the obstacle that terrifies you, and make my utmost effort to surmount it." "If you accomplish that," said my companion, "I will prefer you to all the great men in Plutarch."

'Just as Moralez had done speaking, Jerome de Moyadas coming in, said to me, "You shall be my son-in-law this very evening: your servant, I suppose, has told you what happened. What do you think of the impudence of the rogue, who would have made me believe that he was the son of my brother's correspondent?" "Signior," answered I, in a melancholy tone, and with the most ingenuous air I could affect, "I find I am not qualified to carry on a deceit. I must sincerely own, that I am not the son of

Juan Velez de Menbrilla." "What do I hear!" cried the old man, interrupting me with equal precipitation and surprise: "how! you not the young man to whom my brother——" "Pray, sir," said I, interrupting him in my turn, "be so good as to hear me to an end. I have loved your daughter these eight days, during which my passion has detained me at Merida; and yesterday, after having come to your assistance, I was about to demand her in marriage, when you stopped my mouth, by giving me to understand that she was destined for another. You told me that your brother, in his last moments, conjured you to bestow her upon Pedro de la Menbrilla; that you promised to comply with his request; and, in short, that you was a slave to your word. This information, I confess, overwhelmed me, and my love, reduced to despair, inspired me with the stratagem I put in practice. I must tell you, however, that I secretly upbraided myself with the trick I had put upon you; but I flattered myself that you would forgive it, when I should have discovered it, and convinced you that I am an Italian Prince, who travel incognito; and that my father is sovereign of certain valleys situated between the Swiss, the Milanese, and Savoy. I imagined that you would be agreeably surprised, when I should have revealed my birth; and I felt all the pleasure of a delicate and passionate husband, in the hope of declaring it to Florentina after our marriage. Heaven," added I, changing my tone, "would not indulge me in so much joy! Pedro de la Menbrilla appears, and I must restore him his name, how much soever the restitution will cost me! You are engaged, by your promise, to choose him for a son-in-law; and

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it is your duty to prefer him to me, without regard to my rank, or compassion for the cruel situation to which you are going to reduce me. I will not pretend to represent, that your brother was only the uncle of your daughter, and that you being her father, it is more just to acquit yourself of the obligation you owe me, than to make it a point of honour to keep a promise which is but slightly binding."

"Yes, doubtless, it is so!" cried Jerome de Moyadas: "therefore I do not intend to hesitate between you and Don Pedro de Menbrilla. If my brother Augustin was still alive, he would not blame me for giving the preference to a man who saved my life; and who is, moreover, a prince, who does not disdain to ask my alliance. I must be an enemy to my own happiness, and entirely deprived of my understanding, if I did not give you my daughter, and even press the celebration of the marriage." "But, Signior," I replied, "do nothing impetuously; consult your own interest only; and, notwithstanding the nobility of my blood—" "Sure you jest!" said he, interrupting me: "ought I to hesitate one moment! No, my prince, I most humbly beseech you to honour the happy Florentina with your hand this very evening." "Well," said I, "be it so; go carry the news yourself, and inform her of her glorious fate."

'While the honest citizen flew eagerly to tell his daughter that she had made the conquest of a prince, Moralez, who had heard the whole conversation, threw himself on his knees before me, saying, "Mon Signior the Italian prince, son of a sovereign of the valleys, situate between the

Swiss, Milanese, and Savoy, give me leave to embrace the feet of your highness, and testify the excessive joy I feel! Upon the faith of a knave, I look upon you as a prodigy! I thought myself the first man in the world, but truly I strike to you, although you have less experience than I." "What! you are no longer uneasy, I hope," said I to him. "O, not at all!" answered he; "I am no longer afraid of Signior Pedro; let him come again as soon as he pleases." Morales and I being now firm in the stirrups, began to regulate the course we should take with the dowry; on which we depended so much, that we could not have thought ourselves more secure of it, had it been already in our pockets. We had not, as yet, got it, for all that; and the catastrophe of the adventure did not answer our expectation.

'In a little time the young man of Calatrava returned, accompanied by two citizens and an alguazil, as formidable on account of his whiskers and swarthy complexion, as of his employment. Florentina's father being present, "Signior de Moyadas," said Pedro to him, "I have brought hither three creditable people, who know me, and can tell you who I am." "Yes, sure," cried the alguazil, "I can tell you; and I certify to all whom it may concern, that I know you. Your name is Pedro, and you are the only son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla: whoever maintains the contrary is an impostor." "I believe you, Mr. Alguazil," said the honest man Jerome de Moyadas; "your evidence is sacred with me, as well as that of the gentlemen merchants who are along with you. I am fully convinced that the young cavalier, who conducted you hither,

is the only son of my brother's correspondent but that does not signify; I am no longer in the mind to give him my daughter."

"Oho! that's another affair," said the alguazil; "I came hither only to assure you, that I know this young man. You are master of your child, and nobody can compel you to part with her against your inclination." "Nor do I intend," said Pedro, interrupting him, "to offer violence to the inclination of Signior de Moyadas; but he will give me leave to ask why he has changed his sentiments, or if he has any cause to complain of me? Let me be assured, at least, that I have not lost the sweet hope of being his son-in-law by my own misbehaviour." "I have no cause to complain of you," replied the old man; "and will even own, that it is with regret I see myself under the necessity of breaking my word, for which I conjure you to forgive me. I am persuaded, that you are too generous to take it amiss, that I prefer to you a rival who has saved my life. Here he is," pursued he, showing me to the company; "this is the person who rescued me from the most imminent danger; and that my excuse may have still more force, I must inform you, he is no less than an Italian prince."

'At these last words, Pedro became mute and confounded; the two merchants stared with the utmost surprise: but the alguazil, accustomed to look upon the worst side of every thing, suspected this wonderful adventure to be a trick that might turn out to his advantage; he eyed me very attentively, and his good-will being baffled by my features, which were utterly unknown to him, he examined my comrade with

the same attention. Unluckily for my highness, he recollected Moralez; and remembering to have seen him in the prison of Cindad Real, "Ah, ha!" cried he, "here is one of our customers; I remember this gentleman, who, I assure you, is one of the most perfect sharpers within the kingdoms and principalities of Spain."—"Softly, Mr. Alguazil," said Jerome de Moyadas; "the young man whom you paint so disadvantageously, is the domestic of a prince."—"Very well," replied the alguazil; "I know enough to form my resolution accordingly, and judge of the master by the man. I don't doubt that these gallants are two cheats, who have agreed to impose upon you. I know how to manage in such cases; and to let you see that these wits are adventurers, I will carry them instantly to gaol. I intend to introduce them to a private conversation with Monsieur the Corregidor; after which they will feel that whipping is not yet out of fashion." "Hold there, master officer," replied the old man; "don't let us push matters so far: people of your profession are not afraid of giving pain to a worthy man. May not this valet be a rogue, and his master a man of honour? Is it a new thing, to see sharpers in the service of princes?" "You joke, with your princes," said the alguazil; "this young fellow is a knight of the post, you may depend upon it; and I arrest him and his comrade in the king's name. I have twenty soldiers at the door, who shall drag them to prison, if they refuse to go with a good grace. Come, my prince," addressing himself to me, "let us march."

'I was thunderstruck at these words, as well as Moralez, and our concern rendered us sus-

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pected by Jerome de Moyadas, or rather convinced him that we actually had a design to defraud him On this occasion, however, he behaved like a gallant man; saying to the alguazil, "Master officer, perhaps your suspicions are false, and perhaps they are but too true. But be it as it will, let us dive no further into the affair: let these two young cavaliers retire wheresoever they please to go, and I beg you will not oppose their retreat: it is a favour I ask, in order to acquit myself of the obligation I owe to them." "Were I strictly to do my duty," answered the alguazil, "I should imprison these gentlemen, without having any regard to your entreaty: but, for your sake, I will relax a little, provided that they quit the town this instant; for if I meet them to-morrow, egad! they shall see what will become of them."

'When Moralez and I understood that we were free, we recollected ourselves a little, endeavoured to talk boldly, and affirm that we were persons of honour; but the alguazil silenced us with a fierce look; and I don't know how, these people have an ascendant over us. We were obliged, therefore, to abandon Florentina and her portion to Pedro de la Menbrilla, who doubtless became the son-in-law of Jerome de Moyadas, and retire with all speed, taking the road to Truxillo, with the consolation of having, at least, got a hundred pistoles by the adventure. About an hour before night, passing by a little village, with a resolution of going further before we should halt, we perceived an inn of a pretty good appearance for that place, and the landlord and his wife sitting on long stones at the door. The husband, a tall, meagre, old fellow, thrummed

upon a wretched guitar, for the diversion of his wife, who seemed to listen with pleasure. "Gentlemen," cried the landlord, when he saw we did not stop, "I advise you to stop at this place: you won't find a village within three weary leagues of this; and even there, I assure you, you won't be so well served as here. Take my word for it, and walk into my house, where I will entertain you handsomely, at a reasonable rate." We suffered ourselves to be persuaded, and approaching the man and his wife, bid them good even; and having seated ourselves by them, began all four to talk of indifferent subjects. The landlord said, he was an officer of the Holy Brotherhood; and his wife was a fat merry dame, who seemed to understand very well how to vend her commodities.

'Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of twelve or fifteen cavaliers, some mounted on mules, and some on horseback, followed by thirty baggage moyls loaded with bales. "Ah! what a number of princes!" cried the landlord, at sight of so many people; "where shall I find lodging for them all?" In a moment, the village was crowded with men and beasts. There was luckily, near the inn, a vast barn, in which the moyls and the baggage were disposed: the mules and horses belonging to the cavaliers were put in other places; and as for the men, they did not concern themselves so much about finding beds as in bespeaking a good supper. The landlord, his wife, and a young maid-servant belonging to the house, were not idle; they slaughtered all the poultry in their yard, which, joined to some ragouts made of rabbits and cats, and a plentiful dish of soup, composed of cauliflowers and mut-

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ton, furnished entertainment enough for the whole company.

'Moralez and I looked at the cavaliers, who from time to time eyed us also. At last we entered into conversation, and told them, that if it was agreeable we would sup in company. They assured us, that we could not do them a greater pleasure: so we sat down all together at table. There was one among them who seemed to be the chief, and for whom the rest, though otherwise very familiar, did not fail to show some deference: it is true, indeed, he kept the upper end, talked in an elevated tone of voice, and even contradicted, sometimes, in a cavalier manner, the sentiments of the rest; who, far from replying in the same manner to him, seemed to respect his opinions. The discourse falling, by accident, on Andalusia, and Moralez taking it into his head to praise Seville, this man said to him, "Signior Cavalier, you are making the eulogium of the city where I first drew breath; or, at least, I was born in its neighbourhood, since the town of Meyrena gave me to the world." "I can say the same thing," answered my companion; "I was likewise born at Meyrena, and I must certainly know your parents: pray, whose son are you?" "I am," said the cavalier, "the son of an honest notary, called Martin Moralez." "Upon my faith!" cried my comrade, with emotion, the adventure is extremely singular: you are then my eldest brother, Manuel Moralez!" "The very same," said the other; "and you are, I suppose, my young brother, Lewis, whom I left in the cradle, when I quitted my father's house?" "That is my name, indeed!" replied my comrade. Upon which they

both got up, and embraced one another with great affection. Then Signior Manuel said to the company, "Gentlemen, this event is altogether marvellous! I have, by accident, met and discovered a brother, whom I have not seen these twenty years and more: allow me to present him to the company." All the cavaliers, who kept themselves standing out of complaisance, saluted the young Moralez, and loaded him with caresses. Afterwards, we sat down again at table, where we remained all night, without going to bed; the two brothers sitting by one another, and conversing by themselves about their family, while the other guests drank and made merry.

'Lewis, after a long conversation with Manuel, taking me aside, said, "All these cavaliers are domestics of the Count de Montanos, whom the king has lately named for viceroy of Majorca. They are conducting their master's equipage to Alicant, where they are to embark. My brother, who is become steward to that nobleman, has proposed to carry me along with him; and, on account of the reluctance I expressed in leaving you, told me, that if you would accompany us, he would procure for you a good employment. Dear friend," added he, "I advise thee not to disdain the offer; let us go together to the island of Majorca: if we find it agreeable, we will stay there; and if we shall be displeased with our situation, we will return to Spain."

'I willingly embraced the proposal; young Moralez and I joined the count's officers, and set out with them from the inn before day. Having, by long marches, gained the city of Alicant, I bought a guitar, and took off a hand-

some suit of clothes, before our embarkation, thinking of nothing but the island of Majorca; and Lewis Moralez was in the same disposition. We seemed to have renounced sharping altogether. To tell you the truth, we had a mind to pass for persons of honour, among the cavaliers in whose company we were; and that kept a check upon our geniuses. At last we went merrily on board, flattering ourselves with the hopes of being at Majorca in a very little time; but scarce had we cleared the Gulf of Alicant, when a terrible tempest arose. I might, in this place of my relation, take an opportunity to make a fine description of the storm; to paint the air all on fire, to make the thunder roar, the winds whistle, the mountain billows roll, &c. But all these flowers of rhetoric apart, I assure you the hurricane was violent, and obliged us to bear away for the point of the island of Cabrera, a desert isle, in which there is a little fort, at that time garrisoned by an officer and five or six soldiers, who gave us a very hospitable reception.

As we were obliged to stay there several days, in order to repair our sails and tackle, we invented different kinds of amusements, to pass the time agreeably. Each followed his own inclination: some played at primero, others sought different diversions, and I went to walk through the island, accompanied by those who loved such exercise. We skipped from rock to rock, for the ground was very uneven, full of stones, and very deficient in good soil. One day, while we considered these parched, withered places, and admired the caprice of Nature, that shows herself fruitful or barren as she pleases, our noses

were invaded, all of a sudden, with a most agreeable smell. We immediately turned to the eastward, from whence that odour came, and perceived with astonishment, among the rocks, a large, round, green spot, surrounded with honeysuckles, even more beautiful and sweet-scented than those that grow in Andalusia. We approached, with pleasure, those charming shrubs, which perfumed the air all round, and found that they bordered upon the entry of a very deep cavern, which being large and light, we descended to the bottom of it, turning by steps of stone, the ends of which were adorned with flowers, the whole forming a natural winding stair-case. When we had got down, we saw several little rills of water, which derived their sources from drops that incessantly distilled from the rocks within, creeping along sand more yellow than gold, and losing themselves in the earth. The water seemed so pure, that we were tempted to drink, and found it so fresh, that we resolved to return next day to the same place, with some bottles of wine, persuaded that we should empty them with vast pleasure.

'It was with regret we quitted such an agreeable place; and when we went back to the fort, we did not fail to boast of our discovery: but the commandant cautioned us, as a friend, against returning to the cavern, with which we were so much charmed. "For what?" said I to him: "Is there any thing to fear?" "Yes, without doubt," he replied; "the corsairs of Algiers and Tripoli sometimes land on this isle, to water at that spring; and one day surprised two soldiers of my garrison, whom they made slaves." It was in vain for the officer to tell us this with a

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very serious air; he could not persuade us, for we believed that he jested: and next day I returned to the cavern, with three more of my companions, without providing ourselves with fire-arms, to show that we dreaded nothing. Young Moralez would not be of the party, choosing rather to stay with his brother, and play in the fort.

'Having descended, as the day before, to the bottom of the cave, we cooled some bottles of wine that we had brought along with us, in the rivulets: and while we drank them deliciously, playing on the guitar, and conversing pleasantly together, we saw several men appear at the mouth of the cavern above, with large whiskers, turbans, and turkish dresses. We imagined that it was a part of the count's domestics, with the commandant of the fort, who had thus disguised themselves, in order to frighten us; and, prepossessed with this fancy, began to laugh, letting no less than ten of them come down, without thinking of defending ourselves. We were, however, soon undeceived in a melancholy manner, and convinced that it was a corsair, who came with his people to carry us off. "Surrender, you dogs," he cried, in the Castilian tongue, "or you shall all be put to the sword!" At the same time, his followers presented their carbines to us, and we should have undergone a fine discharge, had we made the least resistance. We preferred slavery to death, and gave our swords to the pirate; who ordered us to be loaded with chains, and conducted to his vessel, which was not far off: then setting sail, he steered with a fair wind toward Algiers.

In this manner were we punished for neglect-

ing the caution of the officer of the garrison. The first thing that the corsair did, was to rifle us of all the money we had. What a fine windfall for him! the two hundred pistoles taken from the young citizens of Placentia, the hundred which Moralez had received from Jerome de Moyadas, and which unluckily I had about me, were all swept away without mercy. My companions had all their purses well furnished. In short, it was an excellent prize. The pirate was rejoiced at his good luck; and the rascal not satisfied with the plunder, insulted us with his raillery, which we did not feel half so much as the necessity that compelled us to hear it. After a thousand jokes, he ordered the bottles of wine which we had cooled at the fountain, and which his people had taken care to seize, to be brought to him, and began to empty them with his crew, drinking to our health by way of derision.

'During this conjuncture, the countenances of my comrades expressed the pain they felt; and their slavery mortified them the more, because they had formed the most delightful idea of their voyage to the island of Majorca, where they had laid their account with leading a most delicious life. As for me, I had fortitude enough to project a plan of conduct for myself; and, less afraid than my fellows, entered into conversation with the railer, and even returned his jokes with a good grace. Pleased with my behaviour, "Young man," said he, "I like thy disposition; for, in the main, instead of sighing and groaning, it is better for one to arm himself with patience, and sail with the stream! Play to us a small air," added he, observing that I had

a guitar; "let us see what thou canst do." I obeyed him as soon as he had ordered my arms to be unchained, and began to thrum upon my guitar in such a manner as acquired his applause. I had, indeed, learned under the best master in Madrid, and played on that instrument pretty well. I sung likewise, and my voice gave no less satisfaction. All the Turks in the vessel expressed the pleasure they felt in hearing me, by gestures of admiration: a circumstance from which I concluded, that their taste for music was extremely delicate. The pirate whispered to me, that I should not be an unhappy slave; and that one of my talents might depend upon an employment that would make my captivity very supportable.

'I felt some joy at these words; but, flattering as they were, I had abundance of uneasiness on the score of this occupation, with the promise of which the corsair regaled me. When we arrived at the port of Algiers,* we saw a great number of people assembled to receive us; who, as soon as we were landed, shouted with joy: besides, the air resounded with the confused noise of trumpets, Moresco flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which formed a symphony more loud than agreeable. The cause of these rejoicings was, a false report which had spread through the city, importing, that the renegado Mehemet (this was our pirate's name) had perished, in attacking a large Genoese vessel: so that all his friends, informed of his return, were eager in their expressions of joy.

'We had no sooner set foot on shore, than I

* Algiers, the capital of the kingdom of the same name is a city on the coast of Barbary, possessed by the Moors.

and my companions were conducted to the palace of Dey Solyman, where a Christian secretary, examining us one by one, asked our names, ages, country, religion, and qualifications. Then Mehemet, showing me to the dey, extolled my voice, and assured him, that I played ravishingly on the guitar. This was enough to determine Solyman to choose me for his own service: accordingly, I was detained in his seraglio, while the other captives were led into a public place, and sold according to custom. What Mehemet had foretold to me in the vessel came to pass. My condition was very happy; far from being abandoned to gaolers, or employed in laborious work, I was, by order of Solyman, disposed of in a particular place, with five or six slaves of quality, who expected every moment to be redeemed, and whose tasks were far from being painful. My business was to water the orange-trees and flowers in the garden, and I could not have been favoured with a more agreeable occupation.

'Solyman was a man about forty years of age; well shaped; very polite; and, for a Turk, mighty gallant. His chief favourite was a Cachemirian woman,* who, by her understanding and beauty, had acquired an absolute dominion over him. He loved her even to adoration, and treated her every day with some entertainment or other; sometimes with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, and sometimes with a comedy in the Turkish taste; that is to say, a dramatic poem, in which modesty and decorum were as

* Cachemire, is a country under the dominion of the Great Mogul, and remarkable for the beauty and wit of its women.

little regarded as the rules of Aristotle. The favourite, whose name was Farrukhnaz, was passionately fond of these diversions, and even made her women sometimes represent Arabian pieces before the dey; wherein she herself played a part, and charmed all the spectators by the grace and vivacity of her action. I being one day among the musicians, at a representation of this kind, Solyman ordered me to play upon the guitar, and sing alone between the acts. I had the good fortune to please, was very much applauded, and the favourite seemed to look upon me with a favourable eye.

'The very next day, while I was busied in watering the orange-trees in the garden, a eunuch passing by me, without stopping or speaking one word, dropped a billet at my feet: I took it up in confusion made up of fear and joy. I laid down upon the ground, that I might not be seen from the windows of the seraglio; and, concealing myself behind the boxes in which the orange-trees were planted, opened the letter, in which I found a pretty valuable diamond, and these words in good Castilian—

"Young Christian, thank heaven for thy captivity. Love and Fortune will make thee happy. Love, if thou art sensible to the charms of a beautiful woman; and Fortune, if thou hast courage to despise the greatest danger."

'I did not in the least doubt that the letter came from the favourite Sultana; the style and diamond persuaded me that she must have been the author. Besides that I am not naturally very timorous, the vanity of being in the good graces

of a grand signior's mistress; and, more than that, the hope of getting from her four times as much money as would be necessary for my ransom, made me form the design of achieving that adventure, whatever dangers might attend it. I continued my work, musing upon the means of entering the apartment of Farrukhnaz, or rather expecting that she would pave the way; for I concluded that she would not stop here, but at least be at more than half the trouble. I was not mistaken: the same eunuch that passed me before, repassed an hour after, and said, "Christian, hast thou considered; and wilt thou have the boldness to follow me?" I answered, yes. He replied, "Very well: heaven preserve thee! Thou shalt see me again to-morrow morning." So saying, he retired. Next day he appeared accordingly, about eight in the morning, and beckoned me to him. I obeyed the signal, and he conducted me into a hall, where there was a large piece of linen, which another eunuch and he had brought thither, and which they were to carry to the Sultana, for the decoration of an Arabian piece, that she was preparing for the entertainment of the dey.

'The two eunuchs, having spread out the cloth, laid me along within it; and, at the hazard of my being suffocated, rolled it up again with me in the middle; then, each taking one end of it, carried me thus, unquestioned, into the bed-chamber of the fair Cachemirian, who had nobody with her but an old slave devoted to her pleasure. When the two unrolled the cloth, Farrukhnaz, at sight of me, broke out into transports of joy, that well discovered the genius of women in that country. Bold as I

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naturally was, I could not see myself transported, all of a sudden, into the secret apartment of the women, without being seized with fear. The lady easily perceived it; and, in order to dissipate my apprehension, said, "Young man, fear nothing: Solyman is gone to his country-house, where he will remain all day; so that we may converse together freely."

'Encouraged by these words, I assumed a look that redoubled the favourite's joy. "I am pleased with your person," said she; "and intend to soften the rigour of your slavery: I believe you worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you; for though you are in the dress of a slave, you have a noble and gallant air, that shows you are not of the vulgar. Speak freely, and tell me who you are. I know that captives of a noble birth disguise their rank, that they may be redeemed at an easier rate; but you have no occasion to behave in that manner with me: I should even be affronted at such a precaution, since I promise to set you at liberty. Be sincere, therefore, and confess that you are a young man of a good family."—"Truly, madam," I replied, "it would be ingratitude in me to repay your generosity with dissimulation; and since you absolutely charge me to reveal my quality, you must be satisfied. I am the son of a Spanish grandee." Perhaps I spoke truth; at least, the sultana believed it; and, pleased that she had thrown her eyes upon a gentleman of importance, assured me that it should not be her fault if we did not see one another often in private. We had a pretty long conversation, and I never saw a more engaging woman: she understood several languages, especially the Castilian, which she spoke

pretty well. When she judged it time for us to part, I went, by her order, into an osier basket, covered with a flowered silk, the work of her own hands. Then the two slaves, who brought me in, were called, and carried me out as a present from the favourite to the dey: a thing sacred from all the men who are intrusted with the guard of the women.

'Farrukhnaz and I found other means of seeing one another; and that amiable captive inspired me with almost as much love for her as she entertained for me. Our intelligence remained secret during two months; although it is very difficult in a seraglio to conceal the mysteries of love so long from the Arguses that watch it. But an unlucky accident disconcerted our small affairs, and my fortune was entirely changed. One day, when I had been introduced to the sultana, in the form of an artificial dragon, that was made for a show, and was conversing with her, Solyman, who I imagined was busy in the country, interrupted us, and entered so hastily into the apartment of his favourite, that the old slave scarce had time to advertise us of his arrival; consequently, I had no leisure to conceal myself, and therefore was the first object that presented itself to the view of the dey.

'He seemed astonished at the sight of me, and his eyes kindled with fury. I looked upon myself as one that touched his last moments, and already imagined myself under the torture. As for Farrukhnaz, I perceived that she was terrified indeed; but instead of owning her crime, and asking pardon, she said to Solyman, "Signior, before you pronounce my sentence, deign to hear my defence: appearances, doubtless,

condemn me, and I seem to have committed a piece of treason worthy of the most horrible chastisement. I have brought this young captive hither; and, in order to introduce him into my apartment, have used the same artifice which I would have employed if I had entertained a violent passion for him. Nevertheless, I take our holy prophet to witness, that, notwithstanding this conduct, I am not unfaithful. I had a mind to converse with this Christian slave, in order to detach him from his sect, and engage him to follow that of the believers. I have found in him such a resistance as I expected; but, however, I have conquered his prejudice, and he has promised to embrace Mahometanism."

'I own, I ought to have contradicted the favourite, without any regard to the dangerous conjuncture in which [illegible] but being in the utmost dejection of spirit, affected with the danger in which I saw a woman whom I loved, and trembling for myself, I remained speechless and confused: I could not utter one word; and the dey, persuaded by my silence that his mistress said nothing but the truth, was appeased. "Madam," said he, "I am willing to believe that you have not injured me, and that a desire of doing a thing agreeable to the prophet, has engaged you to hazard such a delicate action. I forgive your imprudence, therefore, provided that this captive takes the turban immediately." He sent for a Marabou* that instant, I was clothed with a Turkish dress, and did all that was required, without having power to resist; or rather, I was ignorant of what I did, so much were my

* Marabous are Mahometan priests.

senses disordered. How many Christians are there, who would have been as base as I was, on such an occasion!

'After the ceremony, I quitted the seraglio, under the name of Sidy Hali, to exercise a small employment bestowed upon me by Soliyman. I never saw the sultana again; but one of her eunuchs coming to me one day, brought from her a present of jewels worth two thousand sultanins of gold, with a billet, in which the lady assured me, that she would never forget my generous complaisance, in suffering myself to be made a Mahometan, in order to save her life. Truly, besides the presents I received from Farukhnaz, I obtained, through her canal, an employment more considerable than the first; and in less than seven years, became one of the richest renegadoes in the city of Algiers.

'You may well believe, that if I assisted at the prayers which the mussulmen put up in their mosques, and fulfilled the other duties of their religion, it was only out of pure grimace. I preserved a determined resolution to re-enter into the bosom of the church; and for that purpose, to withdraw one day into Spain or Italy, with the riches which I should amass. In the mean time, I lived very agreeably, was lodged in a fine house, had superb gardens, a great number of slaves, and very handsome women in my seraglio. Though the use of wine is forbid in that country to Mahometans, they don't fail, for the most part, to drink it in private. As for my own part, I drank it without ceremony, as almost all renegadoes do. I remember I had two companions with whom I often committed a debauch within the night. One was a Jew, the other an

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Arabian, and both, as I imagined, honest men; so that I lived with them in the greatest familiarity. One evening, I invited them to supper, and a dog, of which I was passionately fond, having died that day, we bathed his body, and buried it with all the ceremony that is observed at the funeral of the Mahometans. In so doing, we had no intention to ridicule the mussulman religion, but only to amuse ourselves, and gratify a foolish whim that seized us in the middle of our debauch, to render the last duties to my dog.

This action, however, had well nigh ruined me. Next day, a man came to my house, and said, "Signior Sidy Hali, I am come hither on an important affair. The cadi* wants to speak with you; take the trouble, if you please, to go to his house immediately: an Arabian merchant, who supped with you last night, has informed him of a certain impiety committed by you, with regard to a dog which you buried. For this reason I summon you to appear this day before that judge, otherwise I give you notice that you will be proceeded against in a criminal manner." So saying, he went away, leaving me thunderstruck with this citation. The Arabian had no cause to complain of me, and I could not comprehend the traitor's reason for playing me this trick. Nevertheless, the thing was not to be neglected. I knew the cadi was a man severe in appearance, but not at all scrupulous at bottom; so I put two hundred sultanins of gold in my purse, and repaired to his house. He carried me into his closet, and said, with a stern look, "You are an impious, sacrilegious, and abomina-

* The cadi is the civil magistrate in every town in Turkey.

ble man! you have interred a dog like a mussulman: what horrid profanation! Is it thus, then, you regard our most sacred ceremonies? and did you become a Mahometan only to make a jest of our worship?" "Mr. Cadi," I replied, "the Arabian who has made such a malicious report of me, that false friend, is an accomplice of my crime—if it be a crime to grant the honours of burial to a faithful domestic; an animal that possessed a thousand good qualities. He loved people of merit and distinction so much, that even in his last moments, as a testimony of his regard, he has left them his whole fortune, by a will of which I am the sole executor. He bequeathes twenty crowns to one, thirty to another, and, sir, he has not forgot you;" added I, taking out my purse: "here are two hundred sultanins of gold which he charged me to give you." The cadi, losing his gravity at this discourse, could not help laughing; and, as we were alone, took the purse without ceremony, saying, while he dismissed me, "Go, Signior Sidy Hali; you have done well, to inter with pomp and honour a dog who had so much consideration for persons of worth!"

'By these means I extricated myself out of this affair; which, if it did not make me more wise, rendered me at least more circumspect for the future. I no longer drank with the Arabian, nor even with the Jew; but chose for a companion at my cups, a young gentleman of Leghorn called Azarini, who was my own slave. I was not like the rest of the renegadoes, who are more cruel to Christian slaves than the Turks themselves; all my captives waited very patiently for their redemption; and indeed I treated them so

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gently, that sometimes they told me, they were more afraid of changing their master than desirous of liberty, whatever charms it has for people in a state of bondage.

'One day the Dey's vessels returned with considerable prizes, bringing in more than a hundred slaves of both sexes, whom they had taken on the coasts of Spain. Solyman kept but a very small number, and the rest were exposed to sale: I arrived in the market-place, and bought a Spanish girl about ten or twelve years old, who wept bitterly, and seemed in despair. I was surprised to see one of her age so sensible of captivity; and bid her, in Castilian, moderate her affliction, assuring her that she had fallen into the hands of a master who did not want humanity, though he wore a turban. The young creature, whose mind was still engrossed by her sorrow, did not hear what I said: she did nothing but sob, complain of her fate, and from time to time cry with a piteous accent, "O my mother! why are we separated? I should have patience were we together!" In pronouncing these words, she turned her eyes toward a woman between forty and fifty years of age, who stood a few paces from her, and with a downcast look waited in sullen silence until somebody should purchase her. I asked the young girl, if the person she looked at was her mother. "Yes, alas! Signior," she replied, "in the name of God do not part us!" "Well, my child," said I, "if it is necessary for your consolation that you should be together, you shall soon be satisfied." At the same time, I approached the mother, in order to bid for her: but I no sooner beheld her face, than I recollected with all the emotion you can ima

gine, the features, the individual countenance of Lucinda. "Just Heaven!" said I to myself; "it is my own mother! 'tis, doubtless, she herself!" As for her, whether the deep affliction occasioned by her misfortunes made all the objects that surrounded her appear to her as enemies; or that my dress disguised me; or rather, that I was much altered in twelve years, during which she had not seen me, I know not, but she did not at all remember me.

'Having bought her also, I carried them both to my house; where, designing to give them the pleasure of knowing who I was, "Madam," said I to Lucinda, "is it possible that my features do not strike you? Have my whiskers and turban disguised me so much, that you do not know your son Raphael?" My mother, starting at these words, considered my countenance, recollected me, and we embraced one another with great tenderness. I then embraced her daughter, who perhaps knew no more of having a brother, than I of having a sister. "Confess," said I to my mother, "that in all your theatrical pieces, you have not a recognition so original as this." "Son," answered she, sighing, "I was at first rejoiced to see you again, but now my joy is converted into grief! In what a situation, alas! do I find you! My slavery gives me a thousand times less pain than that odious dress!"—"In good faith! madam," said I, interrupting her with a laugh, "I admire your delicacy, which, to be sure, is very commendable in an actress! Why, good God! mother, you must be greatly altered, if my metamorphosis offends you so much! instead of finding fault with my turban, look upon me rather as an actor who plays the

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part of a Turk upon the stage: though I am
renegado, I am no more a mussulman now th
when I was in Spain; and at bottom I feel m
self still attached to my religion: when you sh
know the adventures that have happened to n
in this country, you will excuse my conduc
Love was my crime; and I sacrifice to that deit
I am somewhat of your disposition, I assure yo
There is still another reason," added I, "whi
ought to moderate your displeasure in seeing n
thus situated. You expected to suffer in Algie
a rigorous captivity; and you find in your maste
a son, tender, respectful, and rich enough
maintain you here in abundance, until we c
lay hold of an occasion of returning certainly in
Spain. So that you must allow that proverb
be true, which says, "It is an ill wind which blo
nobody good."

"Son," said Lucinda to me, "since you desi
to repass one day into your native country, a
there abjure the religion of Mahomet, I am co
forted. Thank heaven!" continued she, "th
I shall be able to carry back your sister Beatric
safe and sound into Castile." "Yes, madam,
cried I, "you shall have it in your power: w
will go all three together as soon as possible, a
rejoin the rest of our family; for I suppose yo
have more marks of your fruitfulness in Spain
"No," said my mother; "I have no other childre
than you two, and you must know that Beatrice
the fruit of lawful wedlock." "Why," I resume
"did you give my little sister that advantage ov
me? How could you resolve to marry? I hav
heard you say a hundred times, during my chil
hood, that you could not forgive a handsome w
man for taking a husband" "Every season has i

reason, my son," she replied; "men of the most firm resolution are apt to change; and would you have a woman be more constant? I will," added she, "recount my history after you left Madrid." Then she made the following narration; which, as it is curious, I will favour you with.

"If you remember it," said my mother, "you quitted young Laganez about thirty years ago; at that time the Duke of Medina Celi told me, that he would come and sup with me in private one evening: he appointed the day; when I waited for that nobleman, who came accordingly, and I had the good fortune to please him. He demanded the sacrifice of all the rivals he might have: I granted his request, in hopes of being well paid for my condescension; and my hopes were not disappointed; for, the very next day, I received from him considerable presents, which were followed by many more, during the course of our correspondence. I was afraid that I should not be able to detain a man of such high rank a long time in my fetters; and this I dreaded the more, because I knew very well that he had escaped from celebrated beauties, whose chains he had broke almost as soon as he had bore them. Nevertheless, far from being every day less and less pleased with my favours, his raptures seemed rather to increase. In short, I had the art to amuse him, and hinder his heart, naturally inconstant, from giving way to its usual levity.

"He had been attached to me already three months, and I had room to flatter myself that his passion would be of long duration; when one of my she-friends and I went to an assembly, where he happened to be with his dutchess, in order to

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hear a concert of vocal and instrumental music. We chanced to place ourselves pretty near the dutchess, who was pleased to take it amiss that I should presume to appear in a place where she was, and sent a message to me, by one of her women, desiring that I would immediately withdraw. I returned an insolent answer; which incensed the dutchess so much, that she complained of it to her husband, who came to me in person, and said, 'Retire, Lucinda; though noblemen of my rank attach themselves to such little creatures as you, they must not forget themselves altogether: if we love you more than our wives, we honour our wives more than you; and as often as you have the insolence to put yourselves in competition with them, you will always have the mortification to be treated with indignity.'

"Luckily for me, the duke spoke this in a tone of voice so low, that not one word was overheard by the people around us. I withdrew, covered with shame, and wept with vexation for the affront I had received. To crown my confusion, the actors and actresses got notice of the adventure that very evening; one would think these people entertain a demon, who delights in reporting to one whatever happens to another. If an actor, for example, is guilty of some extravagant action in a debauch, or an actress enters into articles with a rich gallant, the company is immediately informed of the circumstance. All my comrades, therefore, knew what happened at the concert; and God knows how they rejoiced at my expense! A spirit of charity, which reigns among them, usually manifests itself on these occasions. I put myself, however, above their tittle-tattle, and consoled myself for the

oss of the Duke de Medina Celi; for he visited ne no more, and I learned a few days after that a Carthusian nun had made a conquest of him.

"When a lady belonging to the theatre has the good fortune to be in vogue, she cannot want lovers; and the passion of a grandee, though it does not last above three days, greatly enhances her price. I found myself besieged with adorers, as soon as it was known in Madrid that the duke had forsaken me. Those rivals whom I had sacrificed to him, more captivated by my charms than ever, returned in crowds, as candidates to my favour: I received homage from a thousand other hearts, and was never so much in fashion before. Of all the men who courted my graces, a fat German, gentleman to the Duke d'Ossuna, seemed the most eager. He had not a very amiable person, but attracted my attention by a thousand pistoles, which he had amassed in the service of his master, and which he squandered away, in order to be deemed worthy of being in the list of my happy gallants. As long as this worthy admirer, whose name was Brutandorf, had money to spend, I gave him a favourable reception; but, when he was ruined, he found my door always shut against him. This proceeding of mine displeased him; and he came to search for me at the theatre, during the play. He found me behind the scenes, and began to reproach me for my ingratitude. I laughed in his face; at which he was enraged, and lent me a box on the ear, like a rude German as he was. I shrieked aloud; interrupted the representation; appeared upon the stage; and, addressing myself to the Duke de Ossuna, who was present with the dutchess his lady, demanded

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justice for the German behaviour of his gentle man. The duke ordered us to go on with the play; and said, he would hear the parties when we had finished the piece. As soon as it was over, I presented myself, in a good deal of emotion, before the duke, and signified my grievance in a pathetic manner. As for the German, he employed but two words in his defence: he said, That far from repenting of what he had done, he would do it again on the same provocation. Both parties being heard, the Duke d'Ossuna said to my adversary, "Brutandorf, I dismiss you from my service; let me never see your face again: not that I mind your having struck an actress, but am offended at your want of respect to your master and mistress, by presuming to disturb the entertainment in their presence.'

"This sentence I could not digest; I was mortally piqued because the German had not been turned away on account of his insolence to me; I imagined that such an affront put upon an actress ought to have been as severely punished as petty treason, and I had laid my account with seeing the gentleman undergo some terrible infliction. This disagreeable event undeceived and convinced me, that the world always makes a distinction between the players and the characters they represent. I was, for this reason, disgusted with the stage, which I resolved to abandon, and go to live at a great distance from Madrid. I accordingly chose the city of Valencia for the place of my retreat; and thither I repaired incognito, with the value of twenty thousand ducats in jewels and cash: a fortune, as I thought, sufficient to maintain me during the

rest of my days; since I designed to lead a very retired life. I took a small house at Valencia, and had no other domestics than a maid-servant and a page, to whom I was as little known as to the whole city. I pretended to be a widow of an officer of the king's household; and said I came to settle at Valencia, because it had the reputation of being one of the most agreeable places in Spain. I saw but very little company, and observed such a regular conduct, that I was never suspected of having been an actress. In spite of my care, however, to keep myself concealed, I attracted the notice of a gentleman who had a country-house near Paterna. He was a very well-made cavalier, between thirty-five and forty years of age, but withal a nobleman very much in debt; which is no great rarity in the kingdom of Valencia more than in other countries.

"This Signior Hidalgo,* finding my person to his liking, wanted to know if I could answer his purpose in other respects: for this end, he uncoupled his spies to make discoveries; and had the pleasure to learn from their report, that, besides some share of beauty, I was a widow of a good fortune. He looked upon me, therefore, as a suitable match; and, in a little time, an honest old gentlewoman came to my house, and told me, from him, that being equally charmed with my beauty and virtue, he made a tender of his heart, and was ready to conduct me to the altar, as soon as I would favour him with my hand. I asked three days to deliberate upon his proposal, and inform myself of his character; which

*Hidalgo is a Spanish word signifying a gentleman.

was so engaging, that, although I was not ignorant of his situation, I easily determined to marry him in a short time after.

"Don Manuel de Xercia—so was my husband called—carried me immediately to his castle, that had a very antique air, of which he was not a little vain. He pretended that one of his ancestors had caused it to be built; and from thence concluded, that there was not a more ancient house in Spain than that of Xercia. But this title of nobility, fair as it was, had like to have been destroyed by time; for the castle, which they were obliged to prop up in several parts, threatened immediate ruin. How happy, therefore, was Don Manuel in marrying me! More than half of my money was employed in reparations; and the rest served to put us in a condition of making a figure in the country. Behold me then (to use the expression) in a new world, changed into the nymph of a castle, and lady of a parish. Here was a metamorphosis! and I was too good an actress, not to support with dignity the splendour with which I was invested by my rank. I assumed lofty theatrical airs, which made the village conceive a high idea of my birth. How merry would they have been at my expense, had they known the truth of the matter! the nobility of the neighbourhood would have bestowed upon me a thousand taunts, and the peasants abated a great deal of the respect they showed.

"I had lived happily near six years with Don Manuel, when he died, leaving my affairs in great perplexity, with your sister Beatrice, then going in her fifth year. The castle, which was all the estate we had, was unluckily engaged to several creditors, the chief of whom was one Bernard

Astuto,* whose name seemed very well adapted to his character: he practised, at Valencia, the business of an attorney, which he exercised with consummate skill, having studied the law in order to qualify himself for cheating with the greater dexterity. What a terrible creditor he was! a castle under the claws of such an attorney, is like a pigeon in the talons of a kite. Accordingly, Signior Astuto, as soon as he was apprized of the death of my husband, did not fail to besiege the castle, which he would undoubtedly have blown up, by the mines that chicanery began to prepare, had not my good genius interposed, and ordered it so that my besieger became my slave. I had the good fortune to captivate him, during an interview we had on the subject of the law-suit. I spared nothing, I own, to inspire him with a passion for me; the desire of saving my land made me practice upon him all those languishing airs which had often succeeded so well. Notwithstanding all my art, I was afraid of being baffled by the attorney, who was so ingulfed in business, that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Nevertheless, this sullen awkward scrawler took more pleasure in looking at me than I imagined. "Madam," said he, "I know not how to make love: I have always applied to my profession so closely, as to neglect the methods and customs of gallantry; but, however, I am not ignorant of the essential part; and, therefore, to come to the point, I assure you, that if you will give me your hand, we will burn the whole proceedings; I will bubble the other creditors who join in the suit against

*Astuto, in the Spanish language, signifies craft or cunning.

you; you shall enjoy the life-rent, and your daughter the property of the land." My own interest, and that of Beatrice, did not permit me to hesitate; I accepted the proposal, and the attorney kept his promise. He turned his arms against the rest of the creditors, and secured me in the possession of my castle; and this, perhaps, was the first time of his having befriended the widow and the orphan.

"I became, therefore, an attorney's wife, without ceasing to be lady of the parish. But this new marriage cost me the esteem of the gentry in Valencia. The women of fashion looked upon me as one who had degenerated, and therefore would not visit me: so that I was obliged to confine myself to an acquaintance among the citizens; a circumstance that gave me some uneasiness at first, because I had been for six years accustomed to correspond with none but ladies of distinction: but I soon consoled myself, and became acquainted with the wives of a scrivener and two attorneys, whose characters were pleasant enough; there was something ridiculous in their behaviour, that diverted me very much. These small gentry believed themselves ladies of some consideration. Alas! said I sometimes to myself, when I saw them forget themselves, this is the way of the world: every one thinks herself better than her neighbour. I imagined that actresses were the only people that did not know themselves: but I find that citizens' wives are not a whit more reasonable. I wish that, by way of punishment, they were obliged to keep in their houses the pictures of their grandfathers: in good faith, they would not place them in the most frequented apartment.

"After having been married four years, Signior Bernardo Astuto fell sick, and died without children; so that, with what he had settled upon me at our marriage, and the money I was left in possession of, I found myself a rich widow, and had the reputation of being so. On this report, a Sicilian gentleman, whose name was Colifichini, resolved to attach himself to me, in order to ruin or espouse me, for he left me the choice. He had come from Palermo to see Spain, and after having satisfied his curiosity, waited (as he said) at Valencia, for an opportunity of repassing into Sicily. This gentleman was not more than five-and-twenty years of age, genteelly shaped, though small; in short, I liked his appearance. He found means to speak with me in private, and I will frankly own, that I became madly fond of him, in our first interview. On his side, the little rogue seemed quite captivated with my charms; and I believe (God forgive me!) we should have married one another immediately, had the attorney's death, which was still recent, permitted me to contract a new engagement so soon: but ever since I had fallen into the taste of matrimony, I maintained the punctilios of decorum.

"We agreed, therefore, to defer our marriage for some time, out of decency, in the mean time, Colifichini continued his addresses; and his passion, far from abating, seemed to increase daily. The poor young man was not very well provided with cash; I perceived it, and he no longer wanted money; for, besides that I was almost twice his age, I remembered that I had laid the men under contribution in my youth, and I looked upon what I now did, as a restitution that acquitted

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my conscience. We waited, as patiently as we could, for the expiration of the time prescribed by custom for women to remain in a state of widowhood; and then went to the altar, where we mutually bound ourselves in the indissoluble ties of wedlock: we afterwards retired to my castle; where, I may say, we lived two years, not so much like a husband and wife, as two tender lovers. But, alas! we were not destined to be long happy in one another; a fatal pleurisy robbed me of my dear Colifichini.

'Here I interrupted my mother, crying, "Hold, madam! your third husband dead too! you must certainly be a very dangerous tenement." "What could I do, son?" answered Lucinda; "was it in my power to prolong the days that heaven had numbered? If I have lost three husbands, I could not help it. Two of them I regretted very much: he for whom I had the least regard was the attorney; as I married him out of interest, I easily consoled myself for his death. But," added she, "to return to Colifichini; I must tell you, that a few months after his decease, having a mind to go and see, with my own eyes, a country-house near Palermo, which he had assigned to me as a jointure in our contract of marriage, I embarked with my daughter, for Sicily; but we were taken in our passage by the vessels of the Dey of Algiers, and conducted into this city. Happily for us, you chanced to be on the spot where we were put up to sale, otherwise we might have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master, who would have maltreated us, and under whom we might have passed our whole life in bondage, without your knowing any thing of the matter."

'Such was my mother's narration; after which, gentlemen, I gave her the best apartment in my house, with the liberty of living as she should think proper; a permission that she relished very much. She had contracted such a habit of being in love, from the repeated attacks of that passion, that she must absolutely have either a husband or a gallant. At first she cast her eyes on some of my slaves: but Haly Pegelin, a Greek renegado, who came frequently to the house, soon engrossed her attention. She conceived a more violent passion for him than ever she felt for Colifichini, and she was so much mistress of the art of pleasing, that she found the secret of charming him also. I winked at their intelligence, and thought of nothing then but my return to Spain. The Dey having already permitted me to fit out a vessel, to cruise and commit piracy, I was busied in making preparations; and eight days before they were finished, said to Lucinda, "Madam, we shall depart from Algiers in a very little time, and lose sight of that place which you detest so much."

'My mother grew pale at these words, and remained speechless. At which being strangely surprised, "What do I see, madam!" said I; "what is the meaning of that consternation in your looks? you seem to be afflicted, rather than rejoiced, at what I tell you! I thought I should have made you happy with the news of every thing's being ready for our departure. Have you no longer any desire, then, of repassing into Spain?" "None at all, son," answered my mother; "I have had so much affliction in that kingdom, that I renounce it for ever." "What do I hear!" cried I, in a transport of grief: "ah! say rather,

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that love detaches you from it. O heavens! what a change is here! When you arrived in this city, every object that presented itself was odious to your eyes: but Haly Pegelin has altered your disposition." "I don't deny it," replied Lucinda; "I love that renegade, whom I design to take for my fourth husband." "What an abandoned project!" said I, interrupting her, with horror; "would you marry a mussulman? You forget that you are a Christian; or rather, you never was one but in name. Ah, mother! what are you about to do? You have resolved upon your own perdition, by voluntarily embracing that which I was compelled to by necessity!"

'I used many more arguments to dissuade her from her design; but I harangued to no purpose: she had formed her resolution; and, not contented with following her own wicked inclination, and quitting me to live with that renegade, she wanted to carry Beatrice along with her also: but this I opposed. "Ah, wretched Lucinda!" said I to her; "if nothing is able to restrain you, at least abandon yourself alone to the fury that possesses your imagination; don't drag a young innocent creature to the precipice from whence you intend to throw yourself." Lucinda went away, without making any reply, and I believed that a remaining ray of reason enlightened and hindered her from being obstinate in demanding her daughter. But how little was I acquainted with my mother! Two days after, one of my slaves said to me, "Signior, take care of yourself; one of Pegelin's captives has imparted a thing to me, of which you cannot take the advantage too soon. Your mother has changed her religion; and to punish you for

having refused to let her carry off Beatrice, is resolved to inform the Dey of your intended flight." I did not doubt one moment that Lucinda was capable of doing what my slave mentioned: I had opportunities of studying the lady, and perceived, that, by the habit of acting sanguinary parts in tragedies, she was so familiarized to guilt, that she could have caused me to be burnt alive; and, I believe, would have been no more affected at my death, than with the catastrophe of a dramatic performance.

'Willing, therefore, not to neglect the advice of my slave, I hastened my embarkation, and hired Turks, according to the custom of the corsairs of Algiers, when they go on a cruise; but I hired no more than such as were necessary to keep me unsuspected, and set sail as soon as possible with all my slaves, and my sister Beatrice. You may well believe, that I did not forget to carry off, at the same time, all my jewels and money, which might amount to the value of six thousand ducats. When we got to sea, we began by securing the Turks, whom we easily chained, because my slaves were more numerous than they: and we had such a favourable wind, that in a little time we made the coast of Italy; and arrived, without the least bad accident, in the harbour of Leghorn, where I believe the whole city crowded to see us come ashore. The father of my slave Azarini being among the spectators, by accident or curiosity, surveyed all the captives, with great attention, as they disembarked; but though he sought among them the features of his son, he little expected to see him again. What transports and embraces were the conse-

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quence of their meeting, when they recollected one another!

'As soon as Azarini had told his father who I was, and what brought me to Leghorn, the old man obliged me, as well as Beatrice, to lodge at his house. I shall pass over in silence the detail of a thousand things which I was obliged to perform, in being readmitted into the bosom of the church; and only observe, that I abjured Mahometanism much more heartily than I embraced it. After having entirely purged myself of the gall of Algiers, I sold my vessel, and set all my slaves at liberty; as for the Turks, they were detained in prison at Leghorn, in order to be exchanged for Christians. I received the best of treatment from both the Azarini's, the youngest of whom married my sister Beatrice, who was, indeed, no bad match for him; being a gentleman's daughter, and heiress of the castle of Xercia, which my mother had taken care to farm out to a rich peasant of Paterna, when she resolved upon her passage into Sicily.

'Having staid some time at Leghorn, I set out for Florence, which I longed much to see, and whither I did not go without letters of recommendation. Azarini the father had friends at the Grand Duke's court, to whom he introduced me as a Spanish gentleman, his ally; and I prefixed Don to my name, imitating in that a great many Spanish plebeians, who, when they are out of their own country, assume that title of honour without ceremony. I boldly, therefore, called myself Don Raphael; and as I had brought from Algiers a sufficiency to support my dignity, appeared at court in a splendid manner. The gentleman to whom Azarini had wrote in my favour,

gave out that I was a person of quality; so that his testimony, together with the airs I assumed, made me easily pass for a man of importance. I soon got acquainted with the principal noblemen, who presented me to the Grand Duke, whom I had the good fortune to please; upon which I bent my whole endeavour to make my court to that prince, and study his disposition. I listened attentively to what the oldest courtiers said to him; and by their discourse discovered his inclinations. Among other things, I observed that he loved raillery, good stories, and sallies of wit. I modelled myself accordingly; and every morning marked in my pocket-book the stories I designed for the day. I had such a number of them in my memory, that my budget might be said to have been full; and yet, in spite of all my management, it was emptied apace in such a manner, that I should either have been obliged to use repetition, or show that I was at the end of my apophthegms; if my genius, fruitful in fiction, had not furnished me with abundance. But I composed tales of gallantry and humour, that were very entertaining to the Grand Duke; and, as it often happens with professed wits, in the morning I invented bright expressions which I uttered as unpremeditated sallies in the afternoon.

'I even elevated myself into a poet, and consecrated my muse to the praise of the prince. I freely own indeed, that my verse was none of the best, therefore, not much criticised; but had it been better, I question if it would have been better received by the Grand Duke, who seemed very well satisfied with my talents; the matter, perhaps, hindered him from finding fault. Be that

as it will, this prince insensibly took such a liking to me, as gave umbrage to the courtiers. They endeavoured to discover who I was, but did not succeed. Getting notice, however, that I had been a renegade, they did not fail to inform the prince of it, in hopes of injuring my character; but this they could not accomplish; on the contrary, the Grand Duke, one day, obliged me to give him a faithful account of my voyage to Algiers. I obeyed; and my adventures, which I did not at all disguise, afforded him infinite pleasure.

"Don Raphael," said he, when I had finished the relation, "I have a regard for you; and will give you a mark of it, which will not permit you to doubt of my friendship. I will make you the depository of my secrets; and to begin with an instance of my confidence, I must tell you that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers. She is the most amiable lady of my court, but at the same time the most virtuous: shut up amidst her family, and solely attached to a husband whom she adores, she seems ignorant of the noise her charms make in Florence. Judge you, if this must not be a difficult conquest. Nevertheless, this beauty, inaccessible as she is to lovers, has deigned sometimes to hear my sighs: I have found means to speak to her in private, and to acquaint her with the sentiments of my heart: but I don't flatter myself with the hope of having inspired her with mutual love; she has never given me cause to form such an agreeable idea; I don't, however, despair of pleasing her by my assiduity, and the mysterious conduct I shall take care to observe.

"My passion for that lady," added he, "is

known to nobody but herself; for, instead of consulting my inclination without constraint, and acting the sovereign, I conceal the knowledge of my flame from all the world; a piece of delicacy which I think I owe to Mascarini, the husband of her I love: his zeal, attachment, services, and probity, oblige me to conduct myself with great secresy and circumspection. I would not plunge a dagger into the bosom of that unhappy husband, by declaring myself the lover of his wife; but wish that he may always remain ignorant, if possible, of the flame that consumes me: for I am persuaded that he would die of grief, if he knew the confidence I now repose in you. I conceal my steps, therefore, and am resolved to make use of you, in expressing to Lucretia all the pangs I suffer, by the constraint which she imposes upon me: you shall be the interpreter of my sentiments, and I don't at all doubt, that you will acquit yourself of the commission to a miracle. Contract an acquaintance with Mascarini, endeavour to gain his friendship, insinuate yourself into his house, and procure the liberty of conversing with his wife. This is what I expect of you, and what I assure myself you will perform with all the discretion and address that such a delicate employment requires."

'I promised to do all that lay in my power to justify the confidence he honoured me with, and contribute to the success of his flame; and soon kept my word with him. I spared nothing to please Mascarini, and accomplished my end with ease. Charmed to find his friendship courted by a man who was beloved of his prince, he met my advances half-way; his house was open to me; I had free access to his lady; and, I dare

say, behaved myself so well, that he had not the least suspicion of the negociation intrusted to my care. It is true, indeed, for an Italian, he was not much addicted to jealousy: he depended upon the virtue of Lucretia, and shutting himself up in his closet, left me frequently alone with her. I went roundly to work the very first opportunity; entertained the lady with the passion of the Grand Duke, and told her, that my sole design in coming to her house, was to talk to her of that prince. She did not seem captivated by him; and yet, I perceived that her vanity hindered her from rejecting his addresses: she took pleasure in hearing them, without feeling any inclination to answer his desires. She did not want understanding; but she was a woman; and I observed that her virtue yielded insensibly to the superb idea of a sovereign in her chains. In short, the prince had reason to flatter himself, that, without employing the violence of a Tarquin, he would see Lucretia subjected to his love. An accident, however, which he little expected, destroyed his hope, as you shall presently hear.

'I am naturally impudent among women; having acquired that qualification, I know not whether it be good or bad, among the Turks: Lucretia was handsome, and I, forgetting that I was only to act the part of an ambassador, talked to her on my own score, offering my services with all the gallantry I was master of. Instead of being shocked at my audaciousness, and replying in a rage, she said, with a smile, "You must own, Don Raphael, that the Grand Duke has made choice of a very faithful and zealous minister, who serves him with an integrity never

enough to be commended!" "Madam," said I, with the same air, "don't let us examine things scrupulously; but lay aside those reflections, which I know very well are not at all favourable to me. I abandon myself to my passion; and after all, don't believe myself the first confidant of a prince who has betrayed his master in affairs of gallantry; for the great have often dangerous rivals in their messages of pleasure." "That may be," replied Lucretia; "but as for my part, I am so high-spirited, that nobody under the degree of a prince shall ever make an impression upon my heart. Conduct yourself accordingly," added she, growing serious; "and let us change the discourse. I am willing to forget what you have said, on condition that you shall never talk to me again in the same manner; otherwise you may chance to repent it."

'Although this was an advertisement to the reader, of which I ought to have taken the advantage, I did not leave off entertaining Mascarini's wife with my passion; I even pressed her with more ardour than ever to make suitable returns to my tenderness, and was rash enough to take liberties. Upon which the lady, being affronted with my discourse and Mussulman behaviour, checked me abruptly, threatened to make the Grand Duke acquainted with my insolence, and assured me that she would desire him to punish me as I deserved. I was piqued, in my turn, at these menaces; my love changed into hate; and determined to be revenged upon Lucretia for her contempt, I went in quest of her husband, whom, after that he had sworn that he would not expose me, I informed him of the correspondence between his wife and the prince,

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not forgetting to paint her very amorous, in order to make the scene more interesting. The minister, to prevent all accidents, shut up his spouse, without any other form of process, in a secret apartment, where she was guarded by people on whom he could rely. While she was thus surrounded by spies, who hindered her from informing the Grand Duke of her situation, I told that prince, with a melancholy air, that he must no more think of Lucretia; that Mascarini had, doubtless, discovered the whole affair, since he had taken it into his head to watch his wife; that I could not imagine what had alarmed his suspicion of me, for I thought I had always behaved with a good deal of address; that the lady, perhaps, had confessed the whole to her husband, in concert with whom she had allowed herself to be locked up, in order to avoid those importunities which alarmed her virtue. The prince seemed very much afflicted at my report: I was touched with his grief, and repented more than once of what I had done; but it was too late: besides, I confess that I felt a malicious joy, when I represented to myself the condition to which I had reduced the proud woman who had disdained my passion.

'I enjoyed, with impunity, the pleasure of revenge, which is so sweet to all the world, and in particular to Spaniards, when the Grand Duke being one day in company with five or six of his courtiers and me, said, "In what manner do you think a man ought to be punished, who has dared to abuse the confidence of his prince, and attempted to deprive him of his mistress?" "He ought," said one, "to be tied to the tails of four horses, and torn to pieces." Another was of

opinion that he should be mauled to death. The least cruel of these Italians, and he whose sentence was most favourable to the delinquent, said, that he would be satisfied with causing him to be thrown from the top of a high tower. "And what is the opinion of Don Raphael?" resumed the Grand Duke; "I am persuaded that the Spaniards are as severe as the Italians in such conjunctures."

'I easily comprehended, as you may believe, that Mascarini had not kept his oath; or that his wife had found means to apprize the prince of what had passed between her and me; and my confusion appeared plain on my countenance. Nevertheless, disconcerted as I was, I answered with a resolute tone: "Sir, the Spaniards are more generous: they would pardon the confidant on such an occasion; and, by their goodness, raise in his soul an eternal regret for having betrayed them." "Well," said the prince, "I find myself capable of such generosity. I pardon the traitor; for I have none but myself to blame, for having bestowed my confidence upon a man whom I did not know, and whom I had reason to distrust, after what I had heard of his character. Don Raphael," added he, "this is the manner in which I will avenge myself: quit my dominions immediately, and let me never see your face again. I withdrew on the instant, not so much afflicted with my disgrace, as rejoiced at coming off so cheaply; and the very next day embarked in a vessel that sailed from Leghorn, on its return to Barcelona.'

I interrupted Don Raphael in this part of his history, by saying, 'For a man of understanding, methinks you committed a great blunder, in ne-

glecting to leave Florence, immediately after the discovery you made to Mascarini, of the prince's passion for Lucretia; you should have concluded, that the Grand Duke would soon come to the knowledge of your infidelity.' 'I grant it,' replied the son of Lucinda; 'and notwithstanding the assurance which the minister gave me, of not exposing me to the resentment of the prince, I proposed to disappear in a very short time.

'I arrived at Barcelona,' continued he, 'with the remainder of the wealth I brought from Algiers; the best part of which I had dissipated at Florence, in the character of the Spanish gentleman. I did not stay long at Catalonia; for, having a longing desire to revisit Madrid, the charming place of my nativity, I satisfied, as soon as possible, the desire that impelled me. When I arrived in that city, I took furnished lodgings, by accident, at a house where a lady lived, whose name was Camilla, and who, though no minor, was a very engaging creature. I take Signior Gil Blas to witness, who saw her, much about that time, at Valladolid. She had still more wit than beauty, and never had a she-adventurer better talents for decoying dupes; but she was none of those coquettes who hoard up the offerings of their gallants; when she had pillaged a man of business, she shared his spoils with the first sharper she found to her liking.

'We loved one another at first sight, and the conformity of our manners joined us so closely, that we soon had every thing in common. Our fortunes, indeed, were not very considerable, and therefore we spent them in a very little time. Neither of us, unluckily, minded any thing but our pleasure, or made the least use of the talents

we had, to live at our neighbour's expense. But misery, at last, awakened our geniuses, which pleasure had benumbed: and Camilla said to me, "My dear Raphael, let us make a diversion, my friend, and renounce a fidelity that ruins us both; you may captivate a rich widow, and I may charm some nobleman; for if we continue faithful to one another, here will be two fortunes lost." "Fair Camilla!" I replied, "you have anticipated me; I was going to make the same proposal to you. I assent to your scheme, my queen: yes, for the better support of our mutual flame, let us attempt advantageous conquests; the infidelities we shall commit, will turn to triumphs in the end."

'This convention being made, we took the field, and made considerable motions at first, without being able to encounter what we sought: Camilla could light upon none but beaus; that is to say, gallants who had not a penny in their pockets; and I could meet with no women, but such as loved better to levy contributions than to pay them. As our arts were useless in love, we had recourse to stratagems, and performed so many, that our fame reached the ears of the corregidor; and that severe judge for the devil ordered one of his alguazils to apprehend us; but this officer being as good-natured as the other was cruel, gave us time to quit Madrid, in consideration of a small sum which we bestowed upon him. We took the road to Valladolid, and fixed in that city; having hired a house, in which I lived with Camilla, who passed for my sister, to avoid scandal. At first we kept our industry under the rein, and began to study the ground, before we should form any enterprise.

'One day, a man accosting me in the street, saluted me very civilly, saying, "Signior Don Raphael, do you know me?" I answered, "No." Upon which he resumed, "But I recollect you: I have seen you at the court of Tuscany, where I then belonged to the Grand Duke's guards. I quitted the service of that prince some months ago, and am come to Spain with an Italian of great finesse: we have been three weeks at Valladolid, and lodge with a Castilian and Gallician, who are, without contradiction, two young fellows of honour. We live together by the work of our hands, make good cheer, and amuse ourselves like princes: if you will join us, you shall be agreeably received by my confederates; for you always seemed to me to be a gallant man, of a disposition not addicted to scruples, and a professed brother of our order."

'The rogue's frankness excited mine. "Since you speak to me with so little reserve," said I to him, "it is but reasonable that I should explain myself in the same manner to you. Indeed, I am not a novice in your profession, and if my modesty would allow me to recount my exploits, you would see that you have not judged too advantageously of my talents; but I will forbear to launch out in my own praise, and content myself with assuring you, while I accept that place in your company which is offered, that I will neglect nothing to approve myself worthy of your choice." As soon as I signified, to this ambidexter, my consent to augment the number of his comrades, he conducted me to the place where they were, and introduced me to their acquaintance. It was here that I saw, for the first time, the illustrious Ambrose de Lamela.—

Those gentlemen examined me touching my skill in the mystery of appropriating to one's self, with address, the effects of another. They wanted to know if I understood the principles of their art; but I showed them a great many stratagems which they did not know, and which excited their admiration of my ability. They were still more astonished, when, despising the dexterity of my hand as a thing too common, I told them that I excelled in tricks which required the assistance of genius. To convince them of this, I recounted the adventure of Jerome de Moyadas; and, upon the simple narration of that affair, they found me such a superior genius, that I was chosen their chief by unanimous consent. I soon justified their choice, by an infinite number of knavish designs, which we put in practice, and of which I was, as it were, the informing soul. When we had occasion for an actress to carry on our projects, we made use of Camilla, who performed all her parts to admiration.

'About that time, our brother Ambrose, being tempted to revisit his native country, set out for Gallicia, assuring us, that we might depend upon his return. He satisfied his desire; and, on his way back again, going to Burgos, with an intention of striking some stroke, an innkeeper of his acquaintance introduced him to the service of Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, with whose affairs he did not fail to make him acquainted. Signior Gil Blas,' he added, addressing himself to me, 'you know how we rid you of your portmanteau, in our furnished lodgings at Valladolid; I don't doubt that you suspected Ambrose of being the chief instrument of that theft. And you was in the right: for, at your arrival, he came and laid

your situation before us; and we, the gentlemen-undertakers, regulated ourselves accordingly. But you are ignorant of the consequences of that adventure, which I will, therefore, let you know. Ambrose and I carried off your portmanteau; and mounting your mules, took the road to Madrid, without encumbering ourselves with Camilla, or the rest of our comrades, who, without doubt, were as much surprised as you at our non-appearance next day.

'On the second day we changed our design; and, instead of going to Madrid, which I had not quitted without cause, we passed by Zeberos, and continued our route as far as Toledo. In this city, our first care was to dress ourselves like gentlemen: then giving ourselves out for two brothers of Gallicia, who travelled out of curiosity, we soon became acquainted with persons of character. As I had been so much accustomed to act the man of quality, I was easily mistaken for such; and people being usually dazzled by expense, we imposed upon every body by the gallant treats we began to give to the ladies. Among the women whom I visited, there was one who touched my heart: I found her fairer than Camilla, and a good deal younger. I was desirous of knowing who she was, and learned that her name was Violante, and that her husband was a gentleman who, cloyed already with her charms, pursued those of a courtezan whom he loved. This piece of information was enough to determine me to establish Violante the sovereign lady of my affection.

'It was not long before she perceived her conquest: I began to follow her every where, and commit a thousand impertinences, to persuade

her that I wanted nothing more than to console her for the infidelity of her spouse. The fair-one made her reflections on the matter, which were such, that at last I had the pleasure of knowing her approbation of my sentiments. I received from her a billet, in answer to several which I had sent to her, by one of those old matrons who are so serviceable in Spain and Italy. The lady gave me to understand, that her husband supped every evening with his mistress, and did not come home before it was very late. That same night I went under the windows of Violante, and entered into a most tender conversation with her: after which we agreed, at parting, to enjoy the same opportunity every night, at the same hour, without prejudice to the other acts of gallantry which we should be permitted to exercise in the day.

'Hitherto Don Balthazar, the husband of my princess, came off very cheaply; but I chose to love naturally, and repaired one evening under the lady's windows, with a design to tell her, that I could live no longer, if I did not enjoy a tête-à-tête with her in a place more suitable to the excess of my love: an indulgence which I had not, as yet, been able to obtain. But just as I got to the place, I saw a man come into the street, who seemed to observe me: in effect, it was the husband, who returned from the courtezan earlier than usual, and who perceiving a cavalier near his house, instead of going in, walked to and fro in the street. I remained, for some time, unresolved; but at last determined to accost Don Balthazar, whom I did not know, and to whom I was also utterly unknown: "Signior Cavalier," said I to him, "pray leave the street free to me for one night; and I will do as much for you another

time." "Signior," he replied, "I was going to make the same request to you: I am in love with a girl, whom her brother guards like a dragon, and who lives not above twenty paces from hence; so that I wish there was nobody in the street." "There is one way," said I, "of satisfying us both, without incommoding either: for," added I, showing him his own house, "the lady whom I serve, lodges there; and let us assist one another, if either of us should be attacked." "With all my heart," he replied; "I will go to my rendezvous, and we will back one another, should there be occasion." So saying, he left me; but it was in order to observe me the better; and this the darkness of the night permitted him to do with impunity.

'As for my part, I approached, in security, the balcony of Violante, who soon appeared, and we began to converse together. I did not fail to insist upon my queen's granting me a private interview in some particular place. She resisted my importunities a little, to enhance the value of the favour which I demanded; then dropping a letter, which she took out of her pocket, "Hold," said she, "you will find in this billet the promise of what you so earnestly desire." She afterwards withdrew, because the hour at which her husband usually returned was at hand; upon which I secured the billet, and advanced to the place where Don Balthazar said he was concerned: but he having very well perceived what I wanted with his wife, came to me, saying, "Well, Signior Cavalier, are you satisfied with your good fortune?" "I have cause to be so," I replied: "and what have you done? has love favoured your addresses?" "Ah, no!" said he; "the

cursed brother of a beauty whom I love is returned from a country house, where I imagined he would stay till to-morrow; and this mischance has balked me of the pleasure with which I flattered myself."

'Don Balthazar and I made mutual protestations of friendship; and, to tie the knot of it the faster, made an appointment to meet the next day in the great square. After we parted, he went home, but mentioned not a word of what he knew to Violante. Next day, he repaired to the great square, where I arriving a moment after him, we saluted one another with demonstrations of friendship, as perfidious on one side, as sincere on the other. Then Don Balthazar made me the confidant of a feigned intrigue with the lady whom he had mentioned the preceding night; recounting a long story that he had invented, in order to engage me in my turn to tell him in what manner I had become acquainted with Violante. I did not fail to fall into the snare, and confess all with the utmost frankness; I even showed the letter which I had received from her, and read the contents in these words:

"I SHALL dine to-morrow with Donna Inez; you know where she lives; it is in the house of that faithful friend that I intend to give you a private interview; for I can no longer refuse that favour which you seem to deserve."

"This," said Don Balthazar, "is a billet which promises you the accomplishment of your wish; I congratulate you beforehand on the happiness that attends you." He could not help being a

little disconcerted while he said this; but he easily concealed his trouble and confusion from me. I was so much engrossed by my hope, that I never thought of observing my confidant, who was obliged, however, to leave me, that I might not at last perceive his agitation. He ran to apprise his brother-in-law of this adventure; but I am ignorant of what passed between them: all I know of the matter is, that Don Balthazar came and knocked at the door while I was with Violante, at the house of Donna Inez; and as soon as we learned that it was he, I escaped at a back door before he came in. As soon as I was gone, the ladies, whom the unforeseen arrival of the husband had disconcerted, recollected themselves, and received him with such effrontery, that he suspected I was either concealed, or had made my escape. I cannot tell what he said to Donna Inez and his wife, because it never came to my knowledge.

'Meanwhile, without suspecting that I was Don Balthazar's dupe, I went away, cursing him, and returned to the great square, where I had appointed to meet Lamela. I did not find him, however; he had little affairs of his own to manage; and the rogue was more fortunate than I. While I waited for him, I saw my perfidious confidant arrive, who came up to me with a gay air, and smiling, asked news of my interview with my nymph at the house of Donna Inez. "I don't know," said I, "what demon, jealous of my pleasures, delights in thwarting them; but while I was alone with my lady, pressing her to make me happy, her husband, whom the devil confound! came and knocked at the door: so that being obliged to get off as fast as I could, I re-

tired by a back-door, cursing to hell the troublesome cuckold who broke all my measures!" "I am truly sorry for it," cried Don Balthazar, who felt a secret joy in seeing my vexation; "what an impertinent husband must he be! I advise you to give him no quarter." "O! as for that," I replied, "I will take your advice; and I can assure you, that his honour shall make its exit this night: his wife, when I left her, bid me not be discouraged at so small a matter; but be sure to come under her window earlier than usual, for she was resolved to admit me into her house; and desired me, at all events, to come attended with two or three friends, for fear of surprise." "What a prudent lady she is!" said he. "I will, if you please, accompany you thither."— "Ah, my dear friend!" cried I, in a transport of joy, while I threw my arms around his neck; "I am infinitely obliged to you!" "I will do more," he resumed; "I am acquainted with a young fellow who is another Cæsar; he shall be of the party, and then you may boldly confide in your escort."

'I did not know what acknowledgments to make to this new friend, so much was I charmed with his zeal. In short, I accepted the succour which he offered, and appointing to meet in the twilight under Violante's balcony, we parted for that time. He went to find his brother-in-law, who was the Cæsar in question; and I took a turn till the evening with Lirnela, who (though he was surprised at the ardour with which Don Balthazar espoused my interest) distrusted him no more than I: we fell nodding into the snare; which, I own, was unpardonable in people of our experience. When I thought t was time to

present myself before Violante's window, Ambrose and I appeared upon the spot, armed with good rapiers; and there we found the lady's husband, with another man, waiting for us, without flinching. Don Balthazar, accosting me, and showing his brother-in-law, said, "Signior, this is the cavalier whose bravery I extolled so much. Get into the house of your mistress, and let not any anxiety hinder you from enjoying the most perfect felicity."

'After some mutual compliments, I knocked at my nymph's door, which being opened by a kind of duenna, I entered; and, without taking notice of what passed behind me, advanced into a hall where Violante was. While I saluted the lady, the two traitors, who had followed me into the house, and shut the door so hastily after them that Ambrose was left in the street, discovered themselves. You may easily imagine that we then came to blows. Both of them charged me at once; but I found them work enough, and employed them in such a manner, that perhaps they repented they had not chose a surer conveyance for their revenge. I ran the husband through the body; and his brother-in-law, seeing him out of the question, got to the door, which the duenna and Violante had opened to make their escape while we were engaged. I pursued him into the street, where I rejoined Lamela, who not being able to extract one word from the women in their flight, did not precisely know what to think of the noise he had heard. We returned to the tavern where we lodged, secured our most valuable effects, and mounting our mules, rode out of the city, without waiting for day.

'Knowing very well that this affair might have bad consequences, and that a search would be made at Toledo, which we were in the right to anticipate, we went to bed at Villarubia, at an inn where, some time after, a merchant of Toledo arrived, in his way to Segorba. As we supped in his company, he recounted the tragical adventure of Violante's husband; and was so far from suspecting us to be concerned, that we boldly asked him all manner of questions about the affair. "Gentlemen," said he, "just as I set out this morning, I heard of the melancholy accident. Search was made every where for Violante, and I was told that the corregidor, who is related to Don Balthazar, has resolved to spare nothing in discovering the murderers. This is all I know of the matter."

'Though I was not much alarmed at the search of the corregidor, I resolved to quit New Castile immediately; reflecting, that when Violante should be found, she would confess all, and on her description of my person to the judge, people would be sent in pursuit of me. For this reason, the very next day, we avoided the highway, through precaution; Lamela being luckily acquainted with three-fourths of Spain, and particularly with the by-ways, through which he could securely repair into Arragon. Instead of going straight to Cuenca, we kept among the mountains adjacent to that city; and through paths that were not unknown to my guide, arrived at a grotto which looked very much like a hermitage; and, indeed, it was the same to which you came last night for an asylum.

'While I was considering the country around, which presented to my view a charming rural

prospect, my companion said to me, "I passed by this place six years ago, at which time that grotto served as a retreat to an old hermit, who gave me a very charitable reception, entertaining me with a share of his provisions. I remember that he was a very holy man, and harangued me with a discourse that had almost detached me from the world: perhaps he is still alive; I will go and see." So saying, the curious Ambrose alighted from his mule, and entered the hermitage; where, having staid some minutes, he returned, calling to me, "Come hither, Don Raphael; come and see a very affecting scene!"

'I alighted immediately; and, tying our mules to a tree, followed Lamela into the grotto, where I perceived an old anchorite, pale and dying, stretched at his full length upon a truckle-bed. A white beard, very bushy, covered his whole breast: and in his hands, clasped together, appeared a large twisted rosary. At the noise we made in approaching him, he opened his eyes, which death had already began to close; and, after having looked at us for a moment, said, "Whosoever you are, my brethren, profit by the spectacle that now presents itself to your eyes: I have lived forty years in the world, and sixty in this solitude. Ah! how long, at this moment, seems the time which I have bestowed on my pleasures: and, on the contrary, how short does that appear which I have consecrated to penitence and devotion! Alas, I am afraid that the austerities of brother John have not sufficiently expiated the sins of the Licentiate Don Juan de Solis!"

'He had no sooner spoke these words, than he expired, leaving us very much affected with his

death. Objects of this sort always make some impression even on the greatest libertines: but we did not retain it long; we soon forgot what he had said to us, and began to take an inventory of every thing in the hermitage; an employment not very laborious, all his furniture consisting in what you may have observed in the grotto. Brother John was not only ill provided with furniture, but also kept a very bad larder; for all the provisions we found was a few filberts, and some crusts of barley-bread, so hard as to be, in all appearance, proof against the gums of the holy man; I say, his gums, because we observed that he had lost all his teeth. All that this solitary habitation contained, and all that we beheld, made us regard the good anchorite as a perfect saint. We were shocked, indeed, at one thing; we opened a paper, folded in the form of a letter, which he had laid upon the table, and in which he begged, that the person who should read it, would carry his rosary and sandals to the Bishop of Cuenca. We did not know with what intention this new father of the desert could desire to make such a present to his bishop; this seemed an outrage against humility, and the behaviour of a man who wanted to set up for canonization; and perhaps there was nothing in it but pure simplicity, for I don't pretend to decide the matter.

'While we discoursed together on this subject, a pleasant thought came into Lamela's head. "Let us stay," said he, "in this hermitage, and disguise ourselves like anchorites, having first buried brother John. You shall pass for him, and I, under the name of brother Anthony, will go a begging in the neighbouring towns and

villages. Besides our being secure from the inquiries of the corregidor, for I don't believe he will think of searching for us here, I have some good acquaintance at Cuenca, which we may cultivate." I approved of this extravagant proposal, not so much from Ambrose's reasons, as out of pure whim, or a desire of acting a part in a play. About thirty or forty paces from the grotto, we dug a grave, in which we modestly interred the old anchorite, after having stripped him of his clothes; that is, a simple robe tied about his middle with a leathern girdle: we likewise cut off his beard, to make a false one for me; and, in short, after having performed his funeral, took possession of the hermitage.

'We fared poorly the first day, being obliged to live on the provisions of the defunct; but next morning, before day, Lamela set out in order to sell the two mules at Toralva, and returned in the evening loaded with victuals, and other things which he had purchased. He brought every thing that was necessary for our transformation: he made for himself a russet gown, and a little red beard of horse-hair, which he fixed so artificially to his ears, that one would have sworn that it was the natural product of his chin. There is not a more dexterous young fellow in the world than he; who likewise weaved the beard of brother John, which he applied to my face, and my brown woollen cap served to cover the artifice, so that there was nothing wanting to our disguise. We found each other so pleasantly equipped, that we could not, without laughing, behold ourselves in this dress, which truly was not very suitable to our real characters. Together with brother John's robe,

I wore his rosary and sandals, of which I made no scruple to deprive the Bishop of Cuenca.

'We had been already three days in the hermitage, without seeing a soul appear; but on the fourth, two peasants entered the grotto, bringing bread, cheese, and onions, to the defunct, whom they still thought alive. As soon as I perceived them, I threw myself on my bed; and it was no difficult matter to deceive them; for, besides that there was not light enough to enable them to distinguish my features, I imitated, as well as I could, the voice of brother John, whose last words I had heard; and they had no suspicion of the cheat. They seemed only surprised to meet another hermit there; which when Lamela perceived, he said, with a hypocritical air, "My brethren, be not surprised to see me in this solitude; I have quitted a hermitage I possessed in Arragon, to come hither and attend the venerable and sage brother John, who in his extreme old age has occasion for a comrade who can provide for his necessities." The peasants gave infinite praise to the charity of Ambrose, and expressed great joy in being able to boast of having two holy personages in their country.

'Lamela, with a large haversack, which he had not forgot to purchase, went a begging for the first time in the city of Cuenca, which is but a small league from the hermitage. With a devout appearance, which he had received from Nature, and the art of making advantage of it, which he possessed in a supreme degree, he did not fail to extort alms from charitable people, with whose liberalities he filled his haversack. "Mr. Ambrose," said I to him at his return, "I congratulate you upon your happy talent of

melting the souls of Christians. Egad! one would think you had been a begging brother among the Capuchins." "I have done something else," answered he, "than filled my knapsack: you must know, I have discovered a certain nymph called Barba, whom I formerly loved, and whom I have found strangely altered; she, like us, has turned devotee, and lives with two or three sisters of the same class, who edify the world in public, and in private lead scandalous lives. As she did not know me at first, 'How! madam Barba,' said I, 'is it possible that you do not recollect one of your old friends, your admirer Ambrose?' 'By my faith! Signior de Lamela,' cried she, 'I should never have expected to see you again in the habit you wear! By what adventure are you become hermit?' 'I cannot tell you at present,' I replied; 'the detail is somewhat long; but I will come back to-morrow to gratify your curiosity, and bring along with me my companion brother John.' 'Brother John!' said she, interrupting me; 'what, the good anchorite who lives in the hermitage near this city! Sure you joke; they say he is more than a hundred years old.' 'It is true,' said I to her, 'that he was once of that age; but he has grown a great deal younger within these few days, and is at present no older than I.' 'Well, let him come along with you,' replied Barba; 'I see there is some mystery in the case.'"

'We did not fail the next day, as soon as it was dark, to go to the house of those bigots, who had prepared a sumptuous entertainment for our reception. We immediately took off our beards and hermit's dress, and, without ceremony, told them who we were. On their side, for fear of

being indebted to us for our frankness, they showed what false devotees are capable of, when they banish grimace. We spent almost all the night at table, and did not retire to our grotto till the dawn. We returned thither again in a very short time; or rather, did the same thing (almost every day) during three months; in which time we spent two-thirds of our money with these nymphs: but one being suspicious of our characters, discovered the whole, and has informed justice against us, which this day intended to visit the hermitage, and secure our persons. Yesterday Ambrose, while he was begging at Cuenca, met one of our sisters, who gave him a note, saying, "One of my friends wrote this letter to me, which I was going to send to you by an express: show it to brother John, and take your measures accordingly." It was this billet, gentlemen, which Lamela delivered to me in your presence, and which has made us quit so suddenly our solitary habitation.'

CHAPTER II.

The council which Don Raphael held with his hearers, and the adventure which happened to them when they designed to leave the wood.

When Don Raphael had ended his narration, which I thought a little tedious, Don Alphonso was so polite as to say, it had diverted him very much. Then Signior Ambrose opened, and addressing himself to his fellow-adventurer, 'Don Raphael,' said he, 'consider that the sun is set.

it will be proper, methinks, to deliberate upon what we are to do.' 'You are in the right,' replied his comrade; 'we must determine upon the place to which we go next.' 'It is my opinion,' resumed Lamela, 'that we should set forward without loss of time; reach Requena this night, and to-morrow enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will give the rein to our industry; and, I foresee, perform some successful strokes.'—His confederate, who, on that subject, believed his presage infallible, assented to his opinion: as for Don Alphonso and me, leaving ourselves to the conduct of these honest people, we waited in silence the result of the conference.

It being therefore resolved that we should take the road to Requena, we began to prepare ourselves for the journey; we made another meal like that in the morning; and loading the horse with the bottle and the remains of our provisions, the approach of night lent us that darkness which we needed for our more secure travelling, and we pushed forward to get out of the wood: but we had not gone a hundred yards, when we discovered among the trees a light that made us very uneasy. 'What is the meaning of that?' said Don Raphael; 'perhaps the ferrets of justice having pursued us from Cuenca, understand that we are in this forest, and are come hither to search.' 'I don't believe that,' said Ambrose; 'these are rather travellers, who, being surprised by the night, have come into this wood to wait for day. But,' added he, 'I may be mistaken. I will go and reconnoitre while you stay here, and I will be back in a moment.' So saying, he advanced toward the light, which was not far off, and approached it softly. Pushing gently

by the leaves and boughs that were in his way, and peeping with all the attention which the thing seemed to deserve, he saw on the grass, round a candle that stuck burning in a lump of clay, four men sitting, who had just despatched a pie, and emptied a pretty large leathern bottle, which they embraced in their turns. He likewise perceived, at some distance from them, a lady and gentleman tied to trees; and a little further, a chaise with two mules richly caparisoned. He guessed at once that the men were robbers; and their discourse, which he overheard, assured him that he was not mistaken in his conjecture. The four banditti expressed an equal desire of possessing the lady who had fallen into their hands, and talked of casting lots for her. Lamela having fully informed himself of the matter, rejoined us, and made a faithful report of what he had seen and heard.

Upon which Alphonso said, 'Gentlemen, that lady and cavalier, whom the robbers have bound to trees, are perhaps persons of the first quality; and shall we suffer them to fall victims to the barbarity and brutality of thieves? Take my advice; let us attack these banditti, and put them all to death.'—'With all my heart,' said Don Raphael; 'I am as ready to do a good as a bad action.' Ambrose, on his part, signified his willingness to lend a hand to such a laudable enterprise: 'for which,' said he, 'I foresee we shall be well recompensed.' I dare likewise affirm, that on this occasion I was not at all afraid of the danger; and that no knight-errant ever showed more readiness to succour damsels in distress. But, not to conceal the truth, the danger was not great: for Lamela having reported that the arms of the rob-

bers were all in a heap at the distance of ten or twelve paces from them, it was no difficult matter for us to execute our design. We tied our horse to a tree, and approached, as gently as possible, the place where they were talking with great warmth; and making a noise that helped us to surprise them, we made ourselves masters of their arms, before we were discovered; then firing a volley upon them, stretched them all breathless on the spot.

During this execution, the light going out, we remained in darkness; but for all that, did not delay to untie the man and woman, who were so much engrossed by their fear, that they had not power to thank us for what we had done in their behalf. It is true, indeed, they did not as yet know whether to look upon us as their deliverers, or as a new troop of banditti, who had not rescued them from the others with any intention to use them better: but we encouraged them, by protesting that we would conduct them to an inn, which Ambrose affirmed was not more than half a league from thence; and that they might there take all necessary precautions for their security, in going whither their affairs called them. After this assurance, with which they seemed very well satisfied, we replaced them in their chaise, and brought them out of the wood, leading the mules by the bridle. Our anchorites afterwards examined the pockets of the vanquished, took care of Don Alphonso's horse, secured those that belonged to the thieves, which we found tied to trees near the field of battle; and carrying them all off, followed brother Anthony, who mounted one of the mules, in order to guide the chaise to the inn, at which, however, we did not arrive in

less time than two hours, although he had assured us that it was not far from the wood.

Every body in the house being a-bed, we knocked loudly at the door; upon which the landlord and his wife got up in a hurry, and were not sorry to see their rest interrupted by the arrival of an equipage, which they thought would have spent more money than it did. The whole inn was lighted in a moment; Don Alphonso and the illustrious son of Lucinda offered their hands to help the cavalier and lady out of the chaise, and even served them as ushers to the chamber whither the landlord conducted them. There a great many compliments passed; and we were not a little astonished, when we understood it was the Count de Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina, whom we had delivered. It is impossible to describe the surprise of that lady, as well as of Don Alphonso, when they recollected each other. The count took no notice of it, so much was he otherwise engrossed, in recounting to us in what manner the robbers had attacked him; and how they had seized his daughter and him, after having killed his postillion, page, and valet de chambre: he ended with telling us, that he had a deep sense of the obligation he lay under to us; and if we would come to him at Toledo, where he should be in a month, we should see whether or not he was ungrateful.

Nor did the daughter of this nobleman forget to thank us for her happy deliverance: and as Raphael and I imagined we should please Don Alphonso by giving him an opportunity of talking a moment in private with that young widow, we gratified his desire, by amusing the Count de Polan. 'Fair Seraphina!' said Don Alphonso to

the lady, in a low voice, 'I will no longer complain of the fate that compels me to live like a man banished from civil society, since I have been so happy as to contribute to the important service which you have received.' 'How!' answered she, sighing, 'is it you who have saved my life and honour? Is it to you that my father and I are so much indebted? Ah, Don Alphonso! why did you kill my brother?' She said no more: but he easily perceived by these words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, that if he was violently in love with Seraphina, she was no less enamoured of him.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

The conduct of Gil Blas and his companions, after they quitted the Count de Polan. The important project which Ambrose formed; and the manner in which it was executed.

The Count de Polan having spent one half of the night in thanking and assuring us that we might depend upon his gratitude, called the landlord in order to consult with him about the means of getting in safety to Turia, whither he designed to go. We left that nobleman to take his measures accordingly; and departing from the inn, followed the road that Lamela was pleased to choose.

After having travelled two hours, day surprised us near Campelio; upon which we immediately betook ourselves to the mountains which are between that village and Requena, and there passed the day in reposing ourselves, and counting our finances, which were a good deal increased by the money of the robbers; for above three hundred pistoles were found in their pockets. As soon as it was dark, we set forward again, and next morning entered the kingdom of Valencia. We retired to the first wood that presented itself to our view, and pushing a good way into it, arrived at a place through which a rivulet of

crystalline water gently glided in its way to join the streams of the Guadalaviar.* The shade projected by the trees, and the grass which the place afforded in abundance to our horses, would have determined us to halt here, even if we had resolved upon it before. We alighted, therefore, and prepared to pass the day very agreeably; but, when we went to breakfast, found very little provision left. We began to want bread, and our bottle was become a body without a soul. 'Gentlemen,' said Ambrose, 'the most charming retreats are but disagreeable without Bacchus and Ceres; our provision must be renewed; I will for that purpose go to Xelva, a handsome town not above two leagues from hence; so that the journey will soon be finished.' So saying, he fixed the bottle and haversack on one of the horses, and mounting a-top of them, went out of the wood with a despatch that promised a speedy return.

He did not come back, however, so soon as we expected; more than half of the day elapsed, and night was ready to cover the trees with her sooty wings, when we beheld our purveyor, whose stay had begun to give us some uneasiness. He exceeded our expectation by the quantity of things, with which he returned loaded: he brought not only the leathern bottle filled with excellent wine, and the knapsack crammed with bread and all sorts of roasted venison, but also a great bundle of cloth, which we observed with a great deal of attention. He perceived our admiration, and

* The Guadalaviar, a river of Spain, rises on the confines of Arragon and New Castile; and, after a southeast course through Valencia, falls into the sea below the city of that name.

said with a smile, 'I defy Don Raphael, and all the world together, to guess why I have purchased these things.' Saying these words, he loosed the bundle, to show the particulars of what we had observed in the gross. He displayed a cloak, and a very long black robe; two doublets with their hose; one of those inkhorns which are composed of two pieces tied together by a string, the horn of which is separated from the pencase; a quire of fine white paper; and a padlock, with a large seal, and green wax; and when he had exhibited his whole purchase, Don Raphael said to him in a jocular way, 'Egad, Mr. Ambrose, it must be confessed you have made a fine bargain! What use, if you please, do you intend to make of it?'—'An admirable one!' replied Lamela: 'all those things have cost me but ten doubloons; and I am persuaded that they will bring us in more than five hundred; you may depend upon it, I am none of those who encumber themselves with useless effects; and to convince you that I did not buy all this like a fool, I will communicate the project I have formed.

'Having furnished myself with bread,' added he, 'I went into a cook's shop, where I ordered six partridges, as many pullets and young rabbits, to be put to the fire; and while they were doing, a man came into the shop in a rage, and loudly complaining of the behaviour of a merchant in town, said to the cook. "By St. Jago! Samuel Simon is the most ridiculous merchant in Xelva; he has affronted me in the open shop: the covetous wretch would not give me credit for six ells of cloth, though he knows very well that I am a responsible tradesman, and that he can lose nothing by me. Is not he a strange animal? He

sells willingly on credit to people of quality, and had rather venture with them, than oblige an honest citizen without any risk. Was there ever such madness? Damned Jew! would he were taken in! My wish will one day be accomplished. There are merchants enough of my opinion."

'Hearing the tradesman speak in this manner, and say a great many things of the same nature, I had a certain forewarning that I should cheat this Samuel Simon. "Friend," said I to the man who complained, "what is the character of this person whom you mention? "A very bad one," answered he hastily; "I assure you he is a rank usurer, though he affects the manners of a benevolent man. He was a Jew, and turned Catholic; but, in his heart, he is still as much a Jew as ever Pilate was; for they say he abjured for interest."

'I lent an attentive ear to all the discourse of the tradesman, and did not fail, when I came out of the cook's shop, to inquire for Samuel Simon's house. A person showed it to me; I surveyed his shop; examined every thing; and my imagination, ready at a call, sketched out a stratagem which I digested, and which appeared worthy of the valet of Signior Gil Blas. I went to a broker's, where I bought these clothes; one suit for acting an inquisitor, another to represent a scrivener, and the third for playing the part of an alguazil.

'Ah, my dear Ambrose!' cried Don Raphael interrupting him, in a transport of joy; 'what a wonderful idea! what a glorious plan! I am jealous of the invention; and would willingly give up the greatest strokes of my life, to be thought the author of such a happy scheme! Yes, Lamela,' added he, 'I see all the richness of thy design,

the execution of which ought to give thee no uneasiness. Thou hast occasion for two good actors to second thee, and they are already found. Thou, who hast the air of a devotee, wilt act the inquisitor very well; I will represent the secretary; and Signior Gil Blas, if he pleases, shall play the part of an alguazil. Thus,' continued he, 'are the cues distributed: to-morrow we will act the piece, and I'll answer for its success, unless some of those unlucky accidents happen, which confound the best concerted designs.

I conceived as yet but very confusedly the project which Don Raphael liked so much, but the whole was explained to me at supper, and the trick seemed ingenious. After having despatched part of our venison, and made our leathern bottle undergo a copious evacuation, we stretched ourselves upon the grass, and were asleep in a short time. 'Get up, get up!' cried Signior Ambrose, at day-break; 'people who have great enterprises to execute, ought not to be lazy.' 'Deuce take you, Mr. Inquisitor!' said Don Raphael, waking; 'how alert you are! that bodes no good to Mr. Simon.' 'I grant it,' replied Lamela; 'and will moreover tell you, I dreamed this night, that I plucked the hairs from his beard: is not that a villanous dream for him, Mr. Secretary?' These jokes were followed by a thousand more, which put us all in good humour: we made a cheerful breakfast, and then prepared for acting our several parts. Ambrose put on the long gown and cloak, which gave him all the air of a commissary of the Holy Office: Don Raphael and I dressed ourselves likewise, so as to bear a pretty good resemblance to a se-

cretary and alguazil. We employed a good deal of time in disguising ourselves; and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon when we quitted the wood, and set out for Xelva. It is true, indeed, we were in no hurry, as our comedy would not begin before the twilight; we therefore went at a very slow pace, and stopping at the city-gate, waited there till night.

As soon as it was dark, we left our horses in this place to the care of Don Alphonso, who was very glad that he had no other part to perform. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and I, went immediately into a publican's in the neighbourhood; and Mr. Inquisitor going foremost, said to the landlord with great gravity, 'Master, I want to talk with you in private.' The landlord carried us into a parlour, where Lamela, finding him alone with us, said, 'I am commissary of the Holy Office, come hither upon a very important affair.' At these words, the publican grew pale, and replied with a faltering voice, that he hoped he had given no cause of complaint to the Holy Inquisition. 'Therefore,' replied Ambrose, 'it has no intention to give you any trouble: God forbid that, too prompt to punish, it should confound innocence with guilt! it is severe, but always just; in a word, one must deserve its chastisements before he feels them. It was not you who brought me to Xelva, but a certain merchant, called Samuel Simon, of whom we have received a very bad report: it is said that he is still a Jew, and embraced Christianity through motives purely carnal. I order you, therefore, in the name of the Holy Office, to tell me what you know of that man. Beware of excusing him, on account of his being your neighbour, and

perhaps your friend; for I declare, if I perceive in your evidence the least reserve, you yourself are a lost man. Come, secretary,' added he, turning to Raphael, 'do your duty.'

Mr. Secretary, who already had his paper and inkhorn in his hand, sat down at a table, and prepared, with the most serious air in the world, to write the deposition of the landlord; who, on his part, protested that he would not betray the truth. 'Well, then,' said the commissary-inquisitor to him, 'let us begin; answer only to my questions; I ask no more. Do you see Samuel Simon frequent the church?' 'It is what I have not observed,' said the publican; 'I don't remember to have seen him at church.' 'Good!' cried the inquisitor. 'Write, that he is never seen at church.' 'I don't say so, Mr. Commissary,' replied the landlord; 'I only say, that I never saw him there: he may be in the same church with me, though I don't perceive him.' 'Friend,' said Lamela, 'you forget that you must not, in your examination, excuse Samuel Simon; I have told you the consequence of it. You must mention only those things that are against him, and not one word in his favour.' 'If that be the case, Signior Licentiate,' resumed the landlord, 'you can't reap much from my deposition; I am not acquainted with the merchant in question, therefore can say neither good nor ill of him; but if you want to know how he lives in his own family, I will go and call Gaspard his prentice, whom you may interrogate; he comes here sometimes to make merry with his friends; and such a tongue! he will discover the whole life and conversation of his master; and, I warrant it, find employment enough for your secretary.'

'I like your frankness,' said Ambrose; 'and you show your zeal for the Holy Office, by informing me of a man acquainted with the morals of Simon. I will report you to the Inquisition. Make haste, then,' continued he, 'and bring hither that same Gaspard whom you mention. But do things discreetly, that his master may have no suspicion of what passes.' The publican acquitted himself of his commission with great secrecy and diligence, and brought along with him the merchant's prentice, who was just such a very talkative young fellow as we wanted. 'Welcome, child,' said Lamela to him; 'you see, in me, an inquisitor nominated by the Holy Office to take information against Samuel Simon, who is accused of Judaism. You live with him, and of consequence are witness to the greatest part of his behaviour. I believe it is unnecessary to advertise you of the obligation you are under to declare all that you know of him, when I order you to do so in the name of the Holy Inquisition.' 'Signior Licentiate,' replied the young man, 'I am very ready to satisfy you on that head, without being commanded in the name of the Holy Office. If my master was to take me for his text, I am persuaded that he would not spare me; I will therefore deal as plainly with him, and tell you in the first place, that he is a close hunks, whose true sentiments it is impossible to discover; one who affects all the exteriors of a holy man, but has not one scruple of virtue at bottom. He goes every evening to the house of a little Abigail.' 'I am glad to hear that,' said Ambrose, interrupting him; 'and I see by what you say, that he is a man of bad morals: but, answer precisely to the questions I am going to

ask. I am particularly enjoined to learn what are his sentiments with respect to religion. Tell me, do you eat pork in your house?' 'I don't think,' replied Gaspard, 'that we have ate of it twice during the whole year that I have lived with him.' 'Very well,' resumed master-inquisitor: 'write, secretary, that pork is never eaten in the house of Samuel Simon. But, to make amends for that, you doubtless eat lamb sometimes?' 'Yes, sometimes,' replied the prentice, 'we have some; for example, last Easter.' 'A lucky epocha!' cried the commissary. 'Write, secretary, that Simon keeps the passover. This goes on excellently well! and, methinks, we have received good intelligence.

'Besides, you must tell me, friend,' added Lamela, 'if you have never seen your master caress little children.' 'A thousand times,' replied Gaspard; 'when he sees little boys pass by his shop, if they are at all handsome he stops and fondles them.' 'Write, Mr. Secretary,' said the inquisitor, interrupting him, 'that Samuel Simon is violently suspected of decoying Christian children into his house, in order to cut their throats. A fine proselyte, indeed! Oh, ho! Mr. Simon, you shall have to do with the Holy Office, take my word for it! you must not imagine that you will be allowed to make your barbarous sacrifices with impunity. Courage! zealous Gaspard,' said he to the prentice; 'declare all that you know of the matter; and give us to understand, that this false Catholic is more attached than ever to the Jewish customs and ceremonies. Does not he spend one day of the week in total inaction?' 'No,' answered Gaspard, 'I have not observed

that; I only perceive that on some days he shuts himself up in his closet, where he remains a long time.' 'Ah, ha!' cried the commissary; 'he keeps the sabbath, as sure as I am an inquisitor. Mark, secretary, mark that he religiously observes the fast of the sabbath. Ah! the abominable wretch! I have only one thing more to ask. Does not he speak also of Jerusalem?' 'Very often,' replied the young man; 'he relates to us the history of the Jews, and in what manner the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed.' 'Right!' said Ambrose. 'Mr. Secretary, let not this piece of intelligence escape you: write, in large characters, that Samuel Simon breathes nothing but the restoration of the temple; and that he meditates night and day the re-establishment of his nation. I do not want to know any more; therefore it is needless to ask any other questions: what the trusty Gaspard has deposed, is enough to bring a whole synagogue to the stake.'

Mr. Commissary of the Holy Office having interrogated the prentice in this manner, told him he might retire; but ordered him, in the name of the Holy Inquisition, to conceal from his master every tittle of what had past. Gaspard having promised to obey, took his leave; and we did not tarry long after he went out, but leaving the public house as gravely as we had entered, went and knocked at the door of Samuel Simon, who opened it with his own hand; and if he was astonished to see three such figures as we, he was much more so, when Lamela, being spokesman, said to him with an imperious tone, 'Mr. Samuel, I command you, in the name of the Holy Inquisition, of which I have the honour to

be commissary, to deliver into my hand, this instant, the key of your closet. I want to see if I cannot find something to justify the informations which have been presented to us against you.'

The merchant, confounded at these words, reeled two steps backward, as if he had received a blow on the stomach. Far from suspecting us of any trick, he believed implicitly that some secret enemy wanted to subject him to the suspicion of the Holy Office; perhaps, too, knowing himself to be no good Catholic, he had cause to be afraid of an information. Be that as it will, I never saw a man more disconcerted: he obeyed without resistance, and opened his closet, with all the respect a man could show, who is in terror of the Inquisition. 'At least,' said Ambrose, while he went in, 'you receive the orders of the Holy Office without contumacy. But,' added he, 'retire into another room, and leave me at liberty to perform my function.' Samuel was as obedient to this order as to the first: he remained in his shop, while we three entered his closet, and began to search for his cash, which we easily found; for it was in an open coffer, and in much greater quantity than we could carry off, consisting of a great number of bags piled upon one another; but the whole in silver. We should have liked gold better; but things being as they were, we were fain to accommodate ourselves to necessity, and fill our pockets with ducats. We stuffed our breeches with them, and crammed them into every other part which we judged proper to conceal them. In short, we were heavy laden, though our cargo did not appear; and this was owing to the address of Ambrose and Don Raphael; who, by their behaviour on

this occasion, let me see that there is nothing like one's being master of his trade.

After having done our business successfully, we came out of the closet; and, for a reason that the reader will easily guess, Mr. Inquisitor took out his padlock, and fixed it to the door with his own hand; then applying the seal, said to Simon, 'Mr. Samuel, I forbid you in the name of the Holy Inquisition, to touch this padlock, as well as the seal, which you are bound to respect, since it is the true seal of the Holy Office. I will return at the same hour to-morrow, in order to take it off, and bring further orders for you.' So saying, he made him open the street-door, through which we joyfully passed, one after another. When we had gone about fifty yards, we began to walk with such speed and nimbleness, that we scarce touched the ground, notwithstanding the burdens which we carried. We soon got out of town; and remounting our horses, pushed toward Segorba, giving thanks to the god Mercury for such a happy event.

CHAPTER II.

The resolution which Don Alphonso and Gil Blas formed after this adventure.

We travelled all night according to our laudable custom, and found ourselves, at break of day, near a little village two leagues from Segorba. As we were all fatigued, we willingly quitted the highway, to get among some willows, which we perceived at the bottom of a little hill, ten or

twelve hundred paces from the village, in which we did not think proper to stop. We found that the willows yielded an agreeable shade, being watered by a small rivulet; and the place suiting our taste, we resolved to spend the day in it. Alighting, therefore, we unbridled our horses to let them feed, and lay down upon the grass, where we took a little repose. We then emptied our knapsack and leathern bottle, and having made a plentiful breakfast, counted all the money which we had taken from Samuel Simon, and which amounted to three thousand ducats; so that, with this sum, and what we had before, we might have boasted of having a pretty good stock.

As it was necessary for some of us to go and buy provision, Ambrose and Don Raphael having quitted their dress of inquisitor and secretary, said that they would take that charge upon themselves; that the adventure at Xelva had only whetted their appetite; that they longed to be at Segorba, to see if some occasion would not offer of striking a new stroke. 'You have nothing to do,' added the son of Lucinda, 'but wait for us under these willows; we will not tarry, but rejoin you in a very short time.'—'Signior Don Raphael,' cried I, laughing, 'bid us rather wait for you till doomsday; if you leave us now, I believe we need not expect to see you sooner.' 'We are affronted by your suspicion,' replied Signior Ambrose; 'but we deserve it at your hands; your distrust is excusable, after what we did at Valladolid; and we cannot blame you for thinking that we will make no more scruple of forsaking you, than of abandoning our comrades in that city: but, however, you are mistaken. The confed-

grates from whose company we withdrew, were persons of very bad character, and their society began to grow insupportable. We must do justice to people of our profession, by affirming that there are no associates in civil life less divided by interest than they; but when there is not a conformity of inclination among them, their good understanding may be broke, as well as that of the rest of mankind. Wherefore, Signior Gil Blas,' added Lamela, 'we beg that you and Don Alphonso will have a little more confidence in us; and let not the desire of Don Raphael and me to go to Segorba, give you the least uneasiness.'

'It is an easy matter,' said the son of Lucinda, to rid them of all cause of anxiety: let them remain masters of the cash, and then they will have, in their own hands, good security for our return. You see, Signior Gil Blas,' added he, 'that we come to the point at once. You shall have pledges in your hands, and I can assure you that Ambrose and I will set out without the least apprehension of your giving us the slip. After such a certain mark of our fidelity, won't you trust entirely to our promise?' 'Yes, gentlemen,' said I; 'and you may now do what you please.' They departed immediately with the leathern bottle and knapsack, leaving me under the willows with Don Alphonso; who, after they were gone, said to me, 'Signior Gil Blas, I must disclose my sentiments to you. I upbraid myself with having had the complaisance to come so far with two sharpers: you cannot imagine how often I have repented of this my conduct. Yesterday, while I took care of the horses, I made a thousand mortifying reflections: I considered

that it ill became a young man, who has principles of honour, to live with such wicked wretches as Don Raphael and Lamela: that if, unluckily, one day, which may not be far off, a trick should miscarry, by which we shall fall into the hands of justice, I shall be shamefully punished with them as a thief, and undergo the most infamous chastisement. These images incessantly occur to my fancy; and I own I have resolved, that I may no longer be an accomplice of their misdemeanours, to separate from them for ever. I don't believe,' continued he, 'that you will disapprove of my design.' 'No, I'll assure you,' answered I; 'though you have seen me act the part of an alguazil, in the comedy of Samuel Simon, don't imagine that these sort of pieces are to my taste. I take heaven to witness, that while I played such a fine part, I said within myself, "In faith; Mr. Gil Blas, if justice should come now and seize you by the collar, you would richly deserve the salary which she would bestow!" I feel myself, therefore, no more disposed than you, Signior Don Alphonso, to remain longer in such good company; and if you will give me leave, I will accompany you. When the gentlemen return, we will demand our share of the finances, and to-morrow morning, or this very night, bid them an eternal adieu.'

The beautiful Seraphina's lover approved of my proposal: 'Let us,' said he, 'get into Valencia, and embark for Italy, where we may engage in the Venetian service. Is it not better to carry arms, than to lead this base guilty life? We shall even be in a condition to make a pretty good figure with the money which we have: not that I can use such ill-gotten wealth without remorse;

but, besides that I am compelled by necessity, if ever I make the least fortune in war, I swear that I will indemnify Samuel Simon.' I assured Don Alphonso that I entertained the same sentiments; and, in short, we resolved to leave our comrades next morning before day. We had not the least temptation to profit by their absence, that is, to decamp immediately with the cash: the confidence they had shown, in leaving us masters of the money, did not permit us to harbour such a thought.

Ambrose and Don Raphael returned from Segorba in the evening; and the first thing they told us was, that their journey had been prosperous; that they had laid the foundation of a stratagem, which in all likelihood would be more advantageous than the last. Accordingly, the son of Lucinda was going to inform us of the particulars, when Don Alphonso declared his resolution to leave them; and let them know that I had the same intention. They used all their endeavours, in vain, to engage us to accompany them in their expedition; for we took leave of them next day, after having made an equal partition of the money, and proceeded on our way to Valencia.

CHAPTER III.

After what disagreeable incident Don Alphonso found his wishes fulfilled; and by what adventure Gil Blas, of a sudden, found himself in a happy situation.

We pushed forward cheerfully, as far as Bunol; where, unfortunately being obliged to halt, Don Alphonso fell sick of a high fever, with violent paroxysms, which made me afraid of his life. Luckily there was no physician in the place, and I was quit for my fear: he was out of danger at the end of three days, and my care helped to re-establish his health. He showed himself very sensible of what I had done for him; and as we felt a reciprocal kindness for one another, we swore an eternal friendship.

We betook ourselves again to the road, still resolved, when we should arrive at Valencia, to take the first opportunity of a passage into Italy: but heaven disposed of us otherwise. Seeing a number of peasants of both sexes, dancing in a circle, and making merry, before the gate of a fine castle, we approached to behold their mirth; and Don Alphonso expected nothing, less than the surprise with which he was seized all of a sudden. He perceived the Baron de Steinbach; who no sooner knew him again, than he ran to him with open arms, saying, in a transport of joy, 'Ah, Don Alphonso! is it you? what an agreeable rencounter is this! While inquiry is

made after you all over the kingdom, chance presents you to my view.'

My companion, alighting immediately, ran and embraced the baron, whose joy seemed immoderate. 'Come, my son,' said the good old man to him; 'you will now know who you are, and enjoy the most perfect happiness.' So saying, he carried him into the castle, which I likewise entered along with them; for while they embraced one another, I had alighted, and tied our horses to a tree. The master of the castle was the first person whom we met. He was a man about fifty years of age, and of a very engaging aspect: 'Signior,' said the Baron de Steinbach, presenting Don Alphonso to him, 'behold your son!' At these words Don Cæsar de Leyva (so was the master of the castle called) threw his arms about Don Alphonso's neck, and weeping with joy, 'My dear son,' said he, 'you see in me the author of your being; if I have let you remain so long in ignorance of your birth, believe me, I did in that a cruel violence to myself: I have a thousand times sighed with sorrow; but I could not do otherwise. I married your mother through inclination; though she was of a birth inferior to mine, and lived under the authority of a harsh father, who reduced me to the necessity of keeping secret a marriage contracted without his consent. The Baron de Steinbach alone was in my confidence, and it was in concert with me that he brought you up. In short, my father is no more, and I am now at liberty to declare you my sole heir. This is not all,' added he; 'you shall be married to a young lady, whose nobility equals mine.' 'Signior,' cried Don Alphonso, interrupting him, 'do not make me pay

too dear for the happiness which you bestow. Cannot I know that I have the honour of being your son, without learning at the same time that you want to make me unhappy? Ah, sir! be not more cruel than your own father; who, though he did not approve of your passion, was not so severe as to force you to marry.' 'Son,' replied Don Cæsar, 'I don't intend to tyrannize over your affections; but be so complaisant as to see the lady whom I destine for your bed: this is all I exact of your obedience. Though she is a charming creature, and a very advantageous match for you, I promise not to constrain you to make her your wife. She is now in the castle; follow me, and you will own that there never was a more amiable object.' So saying, he conducted Don Alphonso into an apartment, whither I attended them, with the Baron de Steinbach.

There was the Count de Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and Don Ferdinand, his son-in-law, who was nephew to Don Cæsar; there were other ladies and gentlemen present also. Don Ferdinand, as was already observed, had carried off Julia; and it was on the occasion of the marriage of these two lovers that the peasants of the neighbourhood were assembled to make merry. As soon as Don Alphonso appeared, and his father had presented him to the company, the Count de Polan got up, and running to embrace him, said, 'Welcome, my deliverer! Don Alphonso,' added he, 'observe the power that virtue has on generous minds; if you killed my son, you have also saved my life. I sacrifice my resentment to you, and give ye that Seraphina whose honour you have preserved. In this manner I acquit myself of my obligation.

The son of Don Cæsar did not fail to testify to the Count de Polan how much he was affected with his generosity; and I do not know whether he felt more joy in discovering his birth, or in learning that he was to be Seraphina's husband. In effect, that marriage was celebrated in a few days after, to the infinite satisfaction of the parties concerned.

As I was also one of the count's deliverers, that nobleman, who knew me again, assured me, he would take upon himself the care of making my fortune; but I thanked him for his generosity, and would not leave Don Alphonso, who made me steward of his house, and honoured me with his confidence. Scarce was he married, when the trick which had been played upon Samuel Simon lying on his conscience, he sent me to that merchant, with all the money which had been stolen from him. I went accordingly to make restitution; and began the business of a steward by doing that which ought to be the end of it.

END OF VOL. II.

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS,

OF SANTILLANE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF MONSIEUR LE SAGE,

BY

TOBIAS SMOLLETT, M.D.,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE

ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS

OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

The amours of Gil Blas and Dame Lorença Sephora.

I WENT accordingly to Xelva, to make restitution of the three thousand ducats which we had stole from Samuel Simon; and will freely own, I was tempted on the road to convert the money to my own use, in order to begin my stewardship under happy auspices. This I might have done with impunity; for, had I travelled five or six days, and then returned, as if I had acquitted myself of my commission, Don Alphonso and his father would never have suspected my fidelity. I did not yield, however, to the temptation, but surmounted it, like a lad of honour; a victory not a little commendable in a young fellow who had associated with great cheats. There are a great many who, though acquainted with honest people only, are not so scrupulous; those especially who are intrusted with sums which they may keep without interesting their reputation.

Having made restitution to the merchant, who expected nothing less, I returned to the castle of Leyva, which the Count de Polan having left, had set out again for Toledo, with Julia and Don Ferdinand. I found my new master more captivated than ever with Seraphina; his Seraphina enchanted by him; and Don Cæsar charmed with the possession of them both. I endeavoured to gain the friendship of that tender father, and succeeded: I became steward of the family, regulated every thing in it, received money from the farmers, disbursed for the expense of housekeeping, and had a despotic power over all the servants. But, contrary to the usual practice of stewards, I did not abuse my power. I did not turn away those domestics who displeased me, nor expected that the rest should be entirely devoted to my will: if they addressed themselves directly to Don Cæsar or his son, when they wanted any favour, far from thwarting their interest, I always spoke in their behalf; besides, the marks of affection which I every moment received from my masters, inspired me with zeal for their service; and I had nothing but their interest in view. There was no legerdemain in my administration; and I was such a steward as is not every day to be met with. While I enjoyed the happiness of my condition, Love, as if he had been jealous of what fortune had done for me, had a mind that I should owe some favours to him also; and produced in the heart of Dame Lorença Sephora, chief waiting woman to Seraphina, a violent inclination for master steward. My conquest (to relate things like a faithful historian) glanced upon her fiftieth year; but a lively look, an agreeable countenance and two fine eyes, which she

knew how to use to the best advantage, might be said to make her still pass for the object of an intrigue: I could have wished only for a few roses in her complexion, for she was extremely pale; a circumstance which I did not fail to attribute to the austerity of celibacy.

The lady practised on me a long time by looks, in which her passion was painted; but instead of answering her glances, I at first seemed not to perceive her design; by which behaviour I appeared to her as a novice in gallantry, a discovery that she did not dislike. Imagining, therefore, that she ought no longer to confine herself to the language of the eyes, with a young man whom she believed less knowing than he was, during the very first conversation we had together, she declared her sentiments in form, that I might not be ignorant of them for the future. This she performed like one who had been at school. She feigned to be disconcerted while she spoke to me; and, after having freely expressed all that she had to say, hid her face, to make me believe sh was ashamed of letting me see her weakness. There was no resisting; and, though I was determined more by vanity than inclination, I showed myself very sensible of her affection: I even affected to be urgent; and acted the passionate lover so well, that I attracted her reproaches. Lorença reproved me, but with so much gentleness, that while she recommended moderation to me, she seemed not at all sorry at my want of it. I should have pushed things still further, if the beloved object had not been afraid of giving me a bad opinion of her virtue, by granting me a victory too cheap. We therefore parted till another occasion: Sephora, persuaded that her false resistance made me look

upon her as a vestal; and I elevated with the sweet hope of bringing the adventure soon to a conclusion.

My affairs were in this situation, when one of Don Cæsar's lackies told me a piece of news which moderated my joy. This young fellow was one of those curious domestics who make it their business to discover what passes in the family. As he was very assiduous in paying his court to me, and regaled me every day with something new, he came one morning and told me, that he had made a pleasant discovery, which he would communicate to me on condition that I should keep it a secret; because it regarded Dame Lorença Sephora, whose resentment (he said) he was afraid of incurring. I was too eager to hear what he had to say, not to promise secrecy; but without seeming to be the least concerned, I asked him, with all the indifference I could affect, what the discovery was with which he intended to entertain me. 'Lorença,' said he, 'every evening privately admits into her apartment the surgeon of the village, a very stout young fellow; and the rogue always remains with her a considerable time. I am willing to believe,' added he, with a satirical smile, 'that this behaviour may be very innocent; but you must allow, that a young man who slips so mysteriously into a maid's chamber, gives a handle to scandal to be very free with her character.'

Although this report gave me as much pain as if I had been actually in love, I took care to conceal my vexation; I even constrained myself so much as to laugh at the news that pierced me to the very soul. But I indemnified myself for that constraint as soon as I saw myself alone. I cursed, I swore, and mused upon the resolution I should take.

Sometimes, despising Lorença, I proposed to abandon her, without even deigning to come to an explanation with the coquette; and sometimes, imagining that I was bound in honour to banish the surgeon from the house, I formed the design of challenging him to single combat: this last resolution prevailed. I lay in ambush towards the evening; and, sure enough, perceived my man enter with a mysterious air into the apartment of my duenna. This was necessary to support my fury. I went out of the castle, and posted myself on the road by which my gallant must return: here I waited for him without flinching, and every moment the desire of fighting him increased. At length my enemy appeared, and I went forward some yards like a Drawcansir; but I do not know how the devil it happened, I found myself all of a sudden seized, like one of Homer's heroes, with an emotion of fear that arrested my steps; and I stood as much confounded as Paris, when he presented himself to fight Menelaus. I began to consider my man, who seemed strong and vigorous; and his sword appeared to be of an excessive length. All this had its effect upon me; nevertheless, out of a point of honour, or otherwise, though I saw the danger with magnifying eyes; and, in spite of nature, which made obstinate efforts to make me desist, I had the boldness to advance towards the surgeon, and unsheath my rapier.

Surprised at my action, he cried, 'What is the matter, Mr. Gil Blas? what is the matter, Mr. Gil Blas? what is the meaning of these demonstrations? You are pleased to be merry, I suppose" —'No, Mr. Barber,' I replied, 'you are mistaken; I am in a very serious humour, and want to know, whether or not you are as brave as gallant. You

must not expect that I will let you possess in tranquillity the favours of the lady whom you visit at the castle.' 'By St. Come!'* said the surgeon, bursting into a loud laugh, 'here is a pleasant adventure. Egad! appearances are very deceitful.' From these words, imagining that he was as little inclined to fight as I, I became more insolent, and said, 'Friend, that wont pass; don't think that I will be satisfied with a simple denial.' 'I see, then,' answered he, 'that I shall be obliged to speak, in order to prevent the mischief which might happen to you or me; and I must reveal a secret, although people of our profession cannot be too discreet. If dame Lorenza admits me by stealth into her apartment, it is with a view of concealing her distemper from the servants: she has an inveterate cancer in her back, which I dress every evening. This is the cause of the visits which alarm you; so that you may henceforth keep your heart at ease. 'Though,' added he, 'if you are not satisfied with this declaration, but absolutely bent upon coming to points, speak the word; I am your man.' So saying, he drew his long rapier, which made me shiver; and put himself upon his guard. 'Enough,' said I to him, sheathing my sword; 'I am not a brute, to refuse to hear reason: after what you have told me, you are no longer my enemy; let us embrace.'

At this discourse, which showed him that I was not such a devil as I at first appeared to be, he laughed, put up his rapier, gave me his hand; and, in short, we parted the best friends in the world.

From that moment, Sephora presented nothing but disagreeable ideas to my imagination: I avoid-

* St. Come was a physician and martyr; therefore properly invoked by the surgeon.

ed every opportunity she gave me of conversing with her in private; and that with such care and affectation that she perceived my disgust. Astonished at such a change, she resolved to know the cause; and at length, finding an occasion to speak with me apart, 'Mr. Stewart,' said she, 'pray tell me why you avoid the sight of me? It is true, I made some advances, but you made suitable returns. Recollect, if you please, the private conversation we had together: you was then all fire, but now you are all ice. What is the meaning of all this?' This was a very delicate question for a plain man: consequently it embarrassed me not a little. I do not remember the answer which I made; but it displeased very much, and that was enough. Sephora, though, by her sweet, modest air, one would have taken her for a lamb, was a very tigress when her wrath prevailed. 'I thought,' said she, darting at me a look full of spite and rage, 'that I did a great deal of honour to a little fellow like you, in discovering to him those sentiments which noble cavaliers would have gloried in exciting: but I am justly punished for having unworthily abased them to a wretched adventurer.' Had she stopped here, I should have thought myself cheaply quit. Her tongue, obedient to her fury, honoured me with a hundred epithets, every one more bitter than another. I ought to have heard them in cool blood; and reflected, that in disdaining the triumph of her virtue, which I had attempted, I committed a crime that no woman can forgive. But I was too passionate to bear reproaches, at which a sensible man, in my place, would have laughed; and my patience forsaking me, 'Madam,' said I, 'we ought not to despise any body: if those noble cavaliers, of whom you speak, had seen

your back, I am sure their curiosity would have proceeded no further.' I had no sooner uttered this repartee, than the furious duenna gave me the rudest box on the ear that ever an affronted woman bestowed. I did not wait for a second, but, by a speedy flight, avoided a shower of blows that would certainly have fallen upon my carcass.

I thanked heaven, when I found myself extricated out of this troublesome affair; and imagined I had nothing more to fear, since the lady had revenged herself. I thought that, for her own honour, she would never mention the adventure: and, indeed, fifteen days elapsed, before I heard any thing of the matter. I myself began to forget it, when I understood that Sephora was ill. I was humane enough to be afflicted at the news: I pitied the lady; and believing, that not being able to overcome a passion so ill-requited, she had fallen a victim to her unhappy love, I reflected with sorrow that I was the cause of her indisposition, and at least lamented the duenna, if I could not love her. How much was I mistaken in my opinion! Her tenderness changed into hate; and, at that time, her whole study was to do me mischief.

One morning, being alone with Don Alphonso, and observing that young gentleman pensive and sad, I begged, in a respectful manner, to know the cause. 'I am chagrined,' said he, 'to find Seraphina weak, ungrateful, and unjust. You are astonished at this information,' added he, perceiving that I listened with surprise; 'and yet nothing is more true. I don't know what cause you may have given Dame Lorença to hate you; but you are assuredly become so odious to her, that if you don't leave the castle with the utmost despatch,

her death, she says, will be inevitable. You ought not to doubt, that Seraphina, who has a regard for you, at first revolted against a hate which she could not gratify without injustice and ingratitude. But, in short, she is a woman: she has a tender affection for Sephora, who brought her up; and that governante is a sort of mother to her, whose death she would reproach herself with, if she was not weak enough to satisfy this her desire: as for my part, notwithstanding the love that attaches me to Seraphina, I shall never have the base complaisance to adhere to her sentiments on this subject. Perish all the duennas in Spain, before I consent to the removal of a young man whom I consider more as a brother than a domestic!'

Alphonso having spoke thus, I said to him, 'Signior, I am born to be the sport of Fortune! I thought she would have ceased to persecute me in your house, where every thing flattered me with quiet and happy days; but how agreeable soever my situation may be, I find I must give it up.' 'Not at all!' cried the generous son of Don Cæsar; 'leave me to make Seraphina hear reason: it shall never be said, that you have been sacrificed to the caprice of a duenna, to whom too much deference has been paid in other respects.'

'Sir,' said I, 'you will only provoke Seraphina, in resisting her will. I had much rather retire, than, by a longer stay in this place, run the risk of breeding any division between such a happy pair: that would be a misfortune for which I should never be consoled.'

Don Alphonso forbade me to take any such resolution: and I saw him so fixed in the design of supporting me, that Lorenca would undoubtedly have met with a rebuff if I had been minded

to oppose her. At certain times, being piqued against the duenna, I was tempted to expose her; but when I came to consider, that in revealing her shame, I should stab the heart of a poor creature whose indisposition I was the occasion of; and that two incurable distempers visibly conducted her to the grave, my resentment was changed into compassion; and I concluded, that since I was such a dangerous mortal, I ought in conscience to re-establish, by my retreat, the tranquillity of the castle. This resolution I executed the very next morning, before day, without bidding adieu to my two masters; lest, through friendship for me, they should oppose my departure. I contented myself with leaving in my chamber a writing, wherein was contained an exact account of my administration.

CHAPTER II.

The fate of Gil Blas, after he quitted the Castle of Leyva, and the happy consequences that attended the bad success of his amours.

I was mounted on a good horse of my own, with two hundred pistoles in my portmanteau, the best part of which I had got by the banditti whom we slew, and the share of the three thousand ducats which had been stolen from Samuel Simon; for Don Alphonso, without making me restore what I had fingered, had made restitution of the whole sum out of his own pocket. Wherefore, considering my effects as wealth become lawful, I en-

joyed it without scruple. I was in possession of a fund, therefore, which did not allow me to be much concerned for the future, over and above the confidence which one of my age always has in his own merit: besides, Toledo presented an agreeable asylum; for I did not at all doubt that the Count de Polan would be pleased with an opportunity of obliging one of his deliverers with a kind reception, and an apartment in his house. But this nobleman I looked upon as my last resource; and resolved, before I should apply to him, to spend part of my money in travelling through the kingdom of Murcia and Grenada, which I longed particularly to see. With this design I set out for Almanza, whence continuing my journey, I went from city to city, as far as Grenada,* without meeting with any bad accident. Fortune, satisfied with having played me so many tricks, seemed willing at length to leave me in quiet: but for all that, she was then hatching a great many more, as will be seen in the sequel. One of the first persons I met in the streets of Grenada, was Signior Don Fernando de Leyva, who was, as well as Don Alphonso, son-in-law to the Count de Polan. We were equally surprised at seeing one another in that place. 'Gil Blas!' cried he, 'how came you to be in this city? What business brings you hither?' 'Signior,' said I, 'if you are astonished to see me in this country, you will be much more so when you hear the cause of my quitting the service of signior Don Cæsar and his son.' Then I recounted all that had passed between Sephora and me, without the least disguise. He laughed heartily at the adventure; then growing serious again,

* Grenada, the capital of the kingdom that bears the same name.

'Friend,' said he, 'I offer you my mediation in this affair, and will write to my sister-in-law.'—'By no means, signior,' said I, interrupting him; 'pray don't write; for I did not leave the castle of Leyva with any intention to return. Make, if you please, another use of the regard you have for me; and if any one of your friends has occasion for a secretary or steward, I beg you will speak to him in my favour. I dare assure you, that you shall have no cause to repent of your recommendation.' 'With all my heart,' he replied; 'I will do what you desire: I am come to Grenada to visit an old aunt who is sick, and I will stay here three weeks longer; at the end of which I shall set out on my return to my castle at Lorqui, where I have left Julia. I lodge here,' added he, showing me a house about a hundred yards from us; 'come and call for me some hours hence; by which time, perhaps, I shall have discovered some suitable post for you.'

And, indeed, at our very next meeting, he said, 'The Archbishop of Grenada, my kinsman and friend, wants a young man of letters, possessed of a good hand, to make fair copies of his writings: for he is a great author, has composed a vast number of homilies, and studies more every day, which he pronounces with applause. As I believe you are such a one as he wants, I proposed you to him, and he has promised to take you into his service. Go and present yourself to him, in my name; and you may judge, by the reception which you shall receive, whether or not I have spoke in your behalf.'

This was such a place as I desired; wherefore, having dressed to the best advantage, in order to appear before that prelate, I repaired one morn

ing to the archbishop's palace. Here, was I to imitate the authors of romance, I should give a pompous description of this episcopal palace of Grenada: I would enlarge upon the structure of the building, extol the richness of the furniture, describe the statues and pictures, and not spare the readers the least tittle of the stories they represented: but I shall content myself with observing, that it equalled the royal palace in magnificence.

I found in the apartments a crowd of ecclesiastics, and gentlemen of the sword, the greatest part whereof were the officers of his grace; his almoners, his gentlemen, his ushers, and his valets de chambre. The laity were, almost all, so superbly dressed, that one would have taken them for noblemen rather than domestics, by their haughty looks, and affectation of being men of consequence. While I beheld them, I could not help laughing and ridiculing them within myself. 'Egad!' said I, 'these people are very happy in bearing the yoke of servitude, without feeling it; for, in short, if they felt it, I imagine that their behaviour would be less assuming.' Addressing myself to a grave jolly personage that stood at the door of the archbishop's closet, in order to open and shut it when there was occasion, I asked civilly if I could not speak with his grace. 'Wait,' said he dryly, 'till his grace comes out to go to mass, and he will give you a moment's audience in passing.' I armed myself with patience, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with some of the officers; but they began to examine me from head to foot, without deigning to speak one syllable; and then looked at one another, smiling with disdain, at the liberty which I had taken to

mingle in their discourse. I was, I own, quite disconcerted at seeing myself treated in this manner by valets; and had scarce recollected myself from the confusion in which I was, when the closet-door opened, and the archbishop appeared.

Immediately a profound silence prevailed among his officers; who, all of a sudden, laid aside their insolent carriage, and assumed a respectful look in presence of their master. This prelate was in his sixty and ninth year, pretty much of the make of my uncle Canon Gil Perez; that is, plump and short: he was very much bandy-legged into the bargain, and so bald, that he had only a small tuft of hair remaining on the back part of his head; for which reason, he was obliged to cover his head in a fine woollen cap with long ears. In spite of all that, I observed in him the air of a man of quality; doubtless, because I knew him to be one. We common people look upon all your great noblemen with a prepossession that often gives them the air of greatness which nature has refused.

The archbishop immediately advancing towards me, asked me what I wanted, with a voice full of sweetness; and I told him that I was the young man of whom Don Fernando de Leyva had spoke to him. He gave me no time to proceed; but cried, 'O! you are the person, then, of whom he spoke so handsomely. I retain you in my service; you are a valuable acquisition. You may stay where you are.' So saying, he went out, supported by two ushers; after having heard some clergymen, who had something to communicate. Scarce was he out of the room, when the same officers who disdained my conversation courted it. They surrounded me, and with the utmost complaisance expressed their joy at seeing me become a com-

mensal officer of the palace. Having heard what their master said to me, they had a longing desire to know on what footing I was retained; but I was so malicious as to balk their curiosity, in revenge for their contempt.

His grace, returning in a little time, made me follow him into his closet, that he might talk with me in private. I concluded that his design in so doing was to try my understanding; and accordingly kept myself on my guard, and was resolved to weigh every word before I should speak it. He first of all examined me on what is called humanity; and I did not answer amiss: he had occasion to see, that I was pretty well acquainted with the Greek and Latin authors. He then put me upon Logic, where I expected him; and found me quite master of that subject. 'Your education,' said he to me, with some surprise, 'has not been neglected: let us now see your hand-writing.' I thereupon took out of my pocket a sheet, which I had brought for the purpose; and the prelate seemed very well pleased with my performance. 'I am satisfied with your hand,' cried he, 'and still more with your understanding.' I shall thank my nephew Don Fernando for having given me such an able young man, whom I look upon as a real present.'

Being interrupted by the arrival of some noblemen of Grenada, who came to dine with the archbishop, I left them together, and withdrew among the officers, who were quite profuse in their complaisance to me. I went to dinner at the usual time; and if they observed me at table, I did not fail to examine them also. What sagacity there is in the exteriors of churchmen! To me they appeared all saints; so much was my mind

overawed by the place where I was; and I did not so much as suspect that there could be any false coin in the case: as if no such thing was ever seen among the princes of the church!

Being seated by an old valet de chambre, whose name was Melchior de la Ronda, he took great care to help me to the choice bits; and this attention, which he expressed for me, inspiring me with a respect for him, he was charmed with my polite behaviour. 'Signior Cavalier,' said he softly to me, after dinner, 'I want to have some private conversation with you.' At the same time he carried me to a part of the palace where nobody could overhear us, and there talked to me in this manner: 'Son, from the very first moment in which I saw you, I felt an inclination for you; of this I will give you a certain proof by imparting something which may be of great advantage to you. You are here in a family where true and false devotees live pell-mell; so that it will be an infinite time before you can, of yourself, be acquainted with the ground. But I will spare you such a tedious and disagreeable study, by discovering the characters of both; after which you may the more easily conduct yourself.'

'I will begin,' added he, 'with his grace, who is a very pious prelate, incessantly employed in edifying and reforming the people, by sermons of his own composition, full of excellent morals. He quitted the court above twenty years ago, in order to devote himself entirely to his zeal for his flock. He is a learned man, and a great orator, whose sole pleasure consists in preaching, and his hearers are ravished with admiration. Perhaps there is a little vanity in the case; but, besides that it does not belong to man to penetrate the

heart, it would be ungrateful in me to inquire into the faults of a person whose bread I eat. If I was permitted to disapprove of any thing in my master, I would blame his severity. Instead of making an allowance for ecclesiastical foibles, he punishes them with too much rigour: in particular, he prosecutes, without mercy, those who, relying on their innocence, attempt to justify themselves in a legal manner, in contempt of his authority. I observe another fault, which is common to him with a great many people of quality: although he loves his domestics, he makes no consideration for their services; but lets them grow old, without ever thinking of procuring for them some small settlement. If he gives them some gratifications sometimes, they owe them solely to the goodness of somebody who has spoken in their behalf; for it would never come into his head to provide for them otherwise.'

This is what the old valet de chambre told me of his master; and he afterwards communicated his thoughts of the clergyman with whom he had dined: pictures which but ill agreed with their external deportment. Indeed, he did not represent them as dishonest men, but only as bad priests: excepting some, however, whose virtue he very much extolled. I was no longer at a loss how to regulate my features among those gentlemen: that very evening, at supper, I, like them, assumed a sage aspect—a task that costs nothing, so that we must not wonder that there are so many hypocrites in the world.

CHAPTER III.

Gil Blas becomes the favourite of the Archbishop, and the canal of his bounty.

I HAD been in the afternoon to fetch my baggage and horse from the inn where I had lodged; after which I returned to supper at the palace, where I found a very handsome chamber and a down bed prepared for me. His grace ordered me to be called early next morning, and gave me a homily to transcribe, enjoining me to copy it with all possible exactness. This I performed minutely, without having forgot either accent, point, or comma; so that the joy he expressed was mingled with surprise. 'Good heaven!' cried he in a transport, when he had surveyed all the sheets of my copy, 'was ever any thing seen so correct! You transcribe so well, that you must certainly understand grammar. Tell me ingenuously, my friend, have you found nothing that shocked you in writing it over? some neglect, perhaps, in style, or improper term?" 'O, sir,' answered I with an air of modesty, 'I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and if I was, I am persuaded the works of your grace would escape my censure.' The prelate smiled at my reply; and, though he said nothing, discovered, through all his piety, that he was a downright author.

By this kind of flattery I entirely gained his good graces; became more and more dear to him every day; and at length understood from Don Fernando, who visited him very often, that I was so much beloved, I might look upon my fortune as already made. This my master himself con-

firmed to me a little time after, on the following occasion. One evening he repeated in his closet, when I was present, with great enthusiasm, a homily which he intended to pronounce the next day in the cathedral; and, not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, obliged me to single out the particular passages which I most admired. I had the good luck to mention those that he himself looked upon to be the best, his own favourite morceaus; by which means I passed in his judgment for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a work. 'This is,' cried he, 'what is called, having taste and sentiment; well, friend, I assure you, thou hast got Bœotian ears.' In a word, he was so well satisfied with me, that he pronounced with some vivacity, 'Gil Blas, henceforth give thyself no uneasiness about thy fortune; I undertake to make it extremely agreeable: I love thee; and, as a proof of my affection, make thee my confidant.'

I no sooner heard these words than I fell at his grace's feet, quite penetrated with gratitude: I heartily embraced his bandy legs, and looked upon myself as a man on the highway to wealth and opulence. 'Yes, my child,' resumed the archbishop, whose discourse had been interrupted by my prostration; 'thou shalt be the repository of my most secret thoughts. Listen with attention to what I am going to say: my chief pleasure consists in preaching; the Lord gives a blessing to my homilies: they touch the heart of sinners, make them seriously reflect on their conduct, and have recourse to repentance. I have sometimes the satisfaction to see a miser, terrified by the images which I present to his avarice, open his treasures, and squander them with a prodigal

hand. I have also tore, as it were, the epicurean from his pleasures; filled hermitages with the sons of ambition, and confirmed in her duty the wife who has been shaken by the allurements of a seducing lover. These conversions, which are frequent, ought themselves to excite my study: nevertheless, I will confess my weakness, I propose to myself another reward, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue reproaches me with in vain! I mean, the esteem which the world shows for fine polished writing. The honour of being reckoned a perfect orator has charmed my imagination: my performances are thought equally nervous and delicate; but I would, of all things, avoid the fault of good authors, who write too long, and retire without forfeiting the least tittle of my reputation. Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas,' continued the prelate, 'one thing that I exact of thy zeal is, whenever thou shalt perceive my pen smack of old age, and my genius flag, don't fail to advertise me of it: for I don't trust to my own judgment, which may be seduced by self-love. That observation must proceed from a disinterested understanding; and I make choice of thine, which I know is good, resolved to stand to thy decision.' 'Thank heaven, sir,' said I, 'that period is far off; besides, a genius like that of your grace, will preserve its vigour much better than any other; or, to speak more justly, will be always the same. I look upon you as another Cardinal Ximenes, whose superior genius, instead of being weakened by age, seemed to receive new strength from it. 'No flattery, friend,' said he, interrupting me; 'I know I am liable to sink all at once: people at my age begin to feel infirmities; and the infirmities of the body often affect

the understanding. I repeat it to thee again, Gil Blas; as soon as thou shalt judge mine in the least impaired, be sure to give me notice; and be not afraid of speaking freely and sincerely, for I shall receive thy advice as a mark of thy affection. Besides, thy interest is concerned; if, unhappily for thee, it should come to my ears that the public says my discourses have no longer their wonted force, and that it is high time for me to repose myself, I frankly declare, that thou shalt lose my friendship, as well as the fortune I have promised. Such will be the fruit of thy foolish reserve.'

Here my patron left off speaking, in order to hear my reply; which was, a promise to behave according to his desire. From that moment he concealed nothing from me, I became his favourite; an event which none of his domestics, except Melchior de la Ronda, could perceive without envy. It was a diverting scene to behold the manner in which the gentlemen and squires then lived with the confidant of his grace: they were not ashamed to be guilty of grovelling meannesses, in order to captivate my good will. I could scarce believe they were Spaniards; though I did them good offices, without being the dupe of their selfish complaisance. His grace the archbishop, at my request, exerted himself in their favour: to one he procured a company, and put him in a condition to make a figure in the army; another he sent to Mexico, to take possession of a considerable post which he had obtained for him; and my friend Melchior, through my means, enjoyed a handsome gratification. This condescension convinced me, that though the prelate did not anticipate people's desires, he rarely refused any favour that was asked.

But what I did for a certain priest, deserves, in my opinion, to be told: one day, a licentiate, whose name was Lewis Garcias, a young man of a very good appearance, was presented to me by our steward; who said, 'Signior Gil Blas, this honest clergyman is one of my best friends; he was chaplain of a nunnery; and his virtue has not escaped scandal: some people have done him ill offices with his grace, who has suspended him, and is unhappily so much prejudiced against him, that he will listen to no solicitation in his behalf. We have employed, to no purpose, all the persons of rank in Grenada, to beg that he may be re-established, but our master is quite inflexible.'

'Gentlemen,' said I, 'you have gone the wrong way to work; it would have been better for Mr. Licentiate if no solicitation had been made; for, in their endeavours to serve him, they have done him a manifest injury. I am well acquainted with his grace; entreaties and recommendations serve only to aggravate, in his opinion, the fault of an ecclesiastic. It was but t'other day I heard him say to himself, 'The more people a priest, who has been guilty of irregularity, engages to speak to me in his behalf, the more is the scandal augmented, and the more severity do I exercise.' 'That is unfortunate,' replied the steward: 'and my friend would be very much embarrassed, if he was not blessed with a good hand: happily for him, he writes to admiration; and, by the help of that talent, keeps himself out of difficulties.' I was curious to see if this writing, so much extolled, was much better than my own: and the licentiate, who had a specimen in his pocket, showed me a page, that I admired very much; for it looked like a writing-master's copy. While

considered this beautiful performance, a thought coming into my head, I desired Garcias to leave the paper, telling him that I might possibly make some use of it that would turn out to his advantage; that I could not explain myself at that time, but would next day tell him more of the matter. The licentiate, to whom, in all probability, the steward had made an eulogium of my genius, withdrew, as much satisfied as if he had been already reinstated in his office. I was truly desirous that he might be so; and that same day laboured for him in the following manner. Being alone with the archbishop, I showed him the writing of Garcias, with which my patron seemed quite charmed: then laying hold of the opportunity, 'Sir,' said I to him, 'since you wont cause your homilies to be printed, I wish they were at least written in this hand.' 'I am satisfied with thine,' answered the prelate; 'but I own I should not be sorry to have a copy of my works in that hand.' 'Your grace,' I replied, 'has nothing to do but to speak: the man who paints so well is a licentiate of my acquaintance, who will be ravished to do that service for you; the more, because by these means he may interest your goodness, in extricating him from the melancholy situation in which he has the misfortune to be at present.'

The prelate did not fail to ask the name of the licentiate: upon which I said, 'He is called Lewis Garcias, and is in despair on account of having incurred your displeasure.' 'That Garcias,' said he, interrupting me, 'was, if I am not mistaken, chaplain to a convent of nuns, and lies under the censure of the church: I remember some informations that I received against him; his morals are but indifferent.' 'Sir,' said I, interrupting

him in my turn, 'I will not undertake to justify him; but I know he has enemies; and pretends that the authors of those informations which you have seen, were more bent upon doing him ill offices, than on telling the truth.' 'That may be,' replied the archbishop; 'there are abundance of very dangerous dispositions in this world. Besides, granting that his conduct has not been always irreproachable, he may have repented of his misbehaviour; and, in short, there is mercy for every transgression. Bring the licentiate hither; I take off his suspension.'

Thus it is, that the most severe men abate of their severity, when more dear self-interest is concerned. The archbishop granted, without difficulty, to the vain pleasure of having his works well writ, that which he had refused to the most powerful solicitations. I carried the news immediately to the steward, who imparted them to his friend Garcias, who the very next day, coming to make an acknowledgment of thanks suitable to the favour obtained, I presented him to my master, who contented himself by reprimanding him slightly, and gave him the homilies to transcribe. Garcias acquitted himself so well, that he was re-established in his ministry, and even obtained the living of Gabia, a large market-town in the neighbourhood of Grenada.

CHAPTER IV.

The Archbishop is seized with a fit of the apoplexy. The dilemma in which Gil Blas found himself, and the method he took to be extricated.

While I thus bestowed my services on different people, Don Fernando being about to leave Grenada, I visited that nobleman before his departure, in order to thank him anew for the excellent post which he had procured for me. I appeared to him so well satisfied with my condition, that he said, 'My dear Gil Blas, I am ravished to find thee so well pleased with my uncle the archbishop.' 'I am charmed with him,' I replied; 'and shall never be able to show myself grateful enough for his generosity to me. Nothing less could have consoled me for the loss of Don Cæsar and his son.' 'I am persuaded,' answered he, 'that they are both extremely mortified at your absence; but, perhaps, you are not separated for ever: Fortune may one day bring you together again.' Melted by these words, I sighed; and found at that instant my love for Don Alphonso so great, that I would have willingly abandoned the archbishop, with all the agreeable hopes he had given me, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle that banished me from it had been removed. Don Fernando perceived the emotions of my soul, which pleased him so much, that he embraced me with affection, and assured me that his whole family would always bear a part in my destiny.

Two months after this gentleman's departure, in the very zenith of my favour, we had a hot

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alarm in the episcopal palace: the archbishop was seized with a fit of the apoplexy; he was, however, succoured immediately, and such salutary medicines administered, that in a few days his health was re-established: but his understanding had received a rude shock, which I plainly perceived in the very next discourse which he composed. I did not, however, find the difference between this and the rest so sensible, as to make me conclude that the orator began to flag, and waited for another homily to fix my resolution. This, indeed, was quite decisive. Sometimes the good old prelate repeated the same thing over and over; sometimes rose too high, or sunk too low: it was a vague discourse, the rhetoric of an old professor, a mere capucinade.*

I was not the only person who took notice of this: the greatest part of the audience, when he pronounced it, as if they had been also hired to examine it, said softly to one another, 'This sermon smells strongly of the apoplexy.' 'Come, Master Homily-critic,' said I then to myself, 'prepare to do your office! you see that his grace begins to fail, it is your duty to give him notice of it; not only as the depository of his thoughts, but likewise, lest some one of his friends should be free enough with him to prevent you; in that case, you know what would happen; your name would be erased from his last will, in which there is, doubtless, a better legacy provided for you than the library of the licentiate Sedillo.'

After these reflections, I made others of a quite contrary nature. To give the notice in question, seemed a delicate point: I imagined that it might

* Capucinade; a sarcasm on the sermons of the Capuchins, not remarkable for correctness

be ill received by an author like him, conceited of his own works; but, rejecting this suggestion, I represented to myself that he could not possibly take it amiss, after having exacted it of me in so pressing a manner. Add to this, that I depended upon my being able to mention it with address, and make him swallow the pill without reluctance. In a word, finding that I ran a greater risk in keeping silence than breaking it, I determined to speak.

The only thing that embarrassed me now was, how to break the ice. Luckily, the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty, by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse. I answered, that his homilies were always admired; but, in my opinion, the last had not succeeded so well as the rest, in affecting the audience. 'How, friend!' replied he, with astonishment; 'has it met with any Aristarchus?'* 'No, sir,' said I; 'by no means: such works as yours are not to be criticised; every body is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you, that your last discourse, in my judgment, has not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are not you of the same opinion?'

My master grew pale at these words; and said, with a forced smile, 'So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste!' 'I don't say so, sir,' cried I, quite disconcerted: 'I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other works.' 'I understand you,' he replied; 'you think I flag, don't you? Come, be plain: you believe it is time

* Aristarchus was a great critic.

for me to think of retiring.' 'I should not have been so bold,' said I, 'as to speak so freely, if your grace had not commanded me: I do no more, therefore, than obey you; and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom.' 'God forbid!' cried he, with precipitation; 'God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing, I should be very unjust. I don't at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding.'

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavoured to find some mitigation, in order to set things to rights again; but how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who has been accustomed to hear himself praised? 'Say no more, my child,' said he; 'you are yet too raw to make proper distinctions. Know, that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove: for my genius (thank heaven!) hath, as yet, lost nothing of its vigour. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant, and keep one of greater ability than you. Go,' added he, pushing me by the shoulders out of his closet; 'go, tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and may heaven conduct you with that sum! Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas; I wish you all manner of prosperity, with a little more taste!'

CHAPTER V.

The step that Gil Blas took after the Archbishop had dismissed him. His accidental meeting with the Licentiate who had been so much obliged to him; with the gratitude of that priest.

I WENT out of the closet, cursing the caprice, or rather weakness of the archbishop, and more enraged against him, than afflicted at the loss of his favour. I even doubted some time, if I should go and touch my hundred ducats; but, after mature deliberation, I was not fool enough to refuse them. I considered, that this money would not deprive me of the right of ridiculing the prelate; in which I was resolved not to be wanting, as often as his homilies should be brought upon the carpet in my presence.

I went, therefore, and demanded the hundred ducats of the treasurer, without mentioning a single word of what had happened between his master and me; and went afterwards in quest of Melchior de la Ronda, to bid him an eternal adieu. He loved me too much to be insensible of my misfortune, which while I recounted, I perceived that grief was painted in his countenance. In spite of all the respect he owed the archbishop, he could not help blaming his behaviour. But as I swore, in my rage, that the prelate should pay for it, and that I would make the whole town merry at his expense, the sage Melchior said to me, 'Believe me, my dear Gil Blas, you had better suppress your resentment. People of an inferior rank ought always to respect persons of quality, whatever cause they may have given

them to complain. There are, I own, some very mean noblemen, who scarce deserve the least consideration; but, as they have the power of doing mischief, they are to be feared.'

I thanked the old valet de chambre for his good advice, which I promised to observe. 'If you go,' said he, 'to Madrid, you shall visit Joseph Navarro, my nephew, who is clerk of the kitchen to Signior Don Balthazar de Zuniga, and (I dare say) a young man worthy of your friendship; frank, brisk, obliging, and forward to serve his friends; I wish he and you may become acquainted.' I answered, that I would not fail to wait on this Joseph Navarro, on my first arrival at Madrid, whither I was determined to go. I then quitted the archbishop's palace, with an intent never to set foot in it again. If I had still been in possession of my horse, I should have, perhaps, set out immediately for Toledo; but I had sold him while I was in favour, believing that I should have no further occasion for his service. I hired a furnished room, resolving to stay a month at Grenada, and then repair to the Count de Polan.

As dinner-time approached, I asked of my landlady, if there was not an eating-house in the neighbourhood; and she answered that there was an excellent one a few steps from her house, where there was very good accommodation, and a great deal of good company. I made her show me the place; and going thither a little after, was directed into a large hall, which bore some resemblance to a refectory. Ten or twelve people sat at a large table, covered with a dirty cloth, conversing with one another, while every one eat his own little portion. My mess was likewise brought, which, at another time, would doubtless have

made me regret the table I had lost; but I was then so much piqued against the archbishop, that the scanty allowance of my eating-house seemed preferable to the good cheer I had enjoyed in his palace. I condemned a variety of dishes, and, arguing like the doctor of Valladolid, 'Unhappy are those,' said I to myself, 'who frequent such pernicious tables, where one must be continually on his guard against sensuality, for fear of overloading his stomach! Can one eat too little?' In my ill-humour, I praised those very aphorisms I had hitherto very much neglected.

While I despatched my commons, without fear of exceeding the bounds of temperance, the licentiate Lewis Garcias, now become vicar of Gabia in the manner already related, came into the hall. He no sooner perceived me, than he came running to salute me with the utmost eagerness, or rather with all the expressions of excessive joy. He hugged me close, and I was obliged to undergo a very long compliment on the service I had done him. He fatigued me with his demonstrations of gratitude. 'Fore gad, my dear patron! since I have had the good fortune to meet you here, we shan't part without a glass; but as there is no good wine in this eating-house, I will carry you, if you please, after our scanty repast, to a place where I will treat you with a bottle of fine dry Lucena, and a glass of fine Muscadine of Foncarrel. We must certainly commit that debauch. I wish I had the happiness of enjoying you a few days only at my parsonage of Gabia. There you shall be received like a generous Mæcenas, to whom I owe the quiet and easy life I lead.'

While he talked with me in this manner, his

allowance was served, and he went to work; not without ceasing, however, to entertain me, at intervals, with something which he thought would flatter my vanity. I had laid hold of this opportunity to speak in my turn; and as he did not forget to inquire about his friend the steward, I made no mystery of my leaving the archbishop's service. I even related to him the most minute circumstances of my disgrace, to which he listened with great attention. After what he had said to me, who would not have expected to hear him, penetrated with the most grateful sorrow, exclaim against the archbishop? But this was the furthest thing from his thoughts. He grew indifferent, and pensive; finished his dinner without speaking a word; then rising suddenly from table, bid me good b'w'ye, in a cool manner, and disappeared. The ungrateful wretch, seeing me no longer in a condition to serve him, spared himself even the trouble of concealing his sentiments. I laughed at his ingratitude, and looking at him with all the contempt he deserved, called to him aloud, that I might be heard, 'Holloa! you sage chaplain of nuns, go and give orders to cool that delicious wine of Lucena, with which you have promised to regale me.'

CHAPTER VI.

Gil Blas goes to see a play at Grenada. His astonishment at the sight of one of the actresses; and the consequences of that event.

GARCIAS was no sooner out of the hall, than wo well-dressed cavaliers came in and sat down by me: they began to talk of the players of the Grenada company, and of a new comedy which was then on the stage. This piece, according to their discourse, made a great noise in the city; and I resolved to go to see it that very day; for I had not been at a play since my arrival at Grenada. As I had almost all that time lived in the archbishop's palace, where that diversion was anathematized, I had taken care not to indulge that pleasure, but amuse myself entirely with my master's homilies.

I repaired, therefore, at the proper time, to the play-house, where I found a numerous assembly; overheard, all around me, dissertations on the piece, before it began; and observed, that every body undertook to criticise it. One person declared himself for, another against the performance. 'Was there ever a work better composed?' said one on my right. 'What a pitiful style!' cried one on my left. Truly, if there are a good many bad authors, it must be allowed there are still a greater number of wretched critics; and when I I consider the mortifications that dramatic poets must undergo, I am astonished that there are any so bold as to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of witlings, who sometimes corrupt the judgment of the public.

At length, the Gracioso* presented himself to open the scene. He was saluted, on his first appearance, with a general clap; by which I perceived that he was one of those spoiled actors, in whom the pit pardons every thing. And, indeed, this player did not speak one word, nor perform one gesture, without attracting applause. The audience made him too sensible of the pleasure they had in seeing him on the stage; and he abused their favour accordingly. I perceived that he sometimes forgot himself in the middle of a scene, and put their prepossession in his behalf to too severe a proof; for they would often have done him justice, had they hissed instead of extolling him to the skies.

There was likewise a clapping of hands at the appearance of some other actors; and, in particular, of an actress, who performed the part of a waiting-woman, whom having considered with attention, no terms can express my surprise, when I recollected in her the person of Laura, my dear Laura! whom I still believed to be in the service of Arsenia at Madrid. I could not doubt that it was she; her shape, her features, the sound of her voice, every thing assured me that I was not mistaken. Nevertheless, as if I had mistrusted the evidence of my eyes and ears, I asked her name of a cavalier who sat by me. 'Hey!' said he, 'from whence came you? It seems you are just arrived, since you don't know the fair Estella!'

The resemblance was too perfect for me to be deceived by this disguise; I could easily conceive, that Laura, when she changed her condition, had

* A favourite actor

also altered her name; and, curious to know her situation, for the public is generally pretty well acquainted with the affairs of persons in her sphere, I begged to know of the same man, if this Estella had not some gallant of importance. He answered, that a Portuguese nobleman, called the Marquis de Marialva, who had been about two months at Grenada, was at a considerable expense on her account. He might have told me a great deal more, if I had not been afraid of fatiguing him with questions. I was more engrossed by the news which this cavalier had told me, than by the representation of the play; and if any body had asked the subject of the piece, when I came out, he would have embarrassed me not a little: I did nothing but muse upon Laura, (or Estella) and firmly resolved to go and visit her next day; though I was not without anxiety about the reception I should meet with. I had reason to believe, that the sight of me would not yield her much pleasure in this brilliant situation of her affairs; nay, I imagined that such a good actress, in order to revenge herself upon one with whom she had certainly cause to be dissatisfied, would probably disclaim his acquaintance. All this did not dissuade me from my design of going. After a slight repast, (for such only my eating-house afforded) I went home to my lodging, where I waited impatiently for the next day.

I slept little that night, and got up before the sun; but as I concluded that a nobleman's mistress would not be visible so early, I spent three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming; resolving to present myself before her in such a condition as would give her no cause to blush at seeing me again. I sallied

out about ten o'clock, and repaired to her lodging, to which I received a direction at the house where the players lived. She possessed the chief apartment of a large house; the door of which being opened to me by a chambermaid, I told her that I wanted to speak with Dame Estella. The maid went in to signify my desire; and I immediately heard her mistress pronounce, with a loud voice, 'Who is the young man? what does he want? Let him come in.' By this I concluded that I had chosen an unseasonable time for my visit; that her Portuguese lover was at her toilet, and that her reason for speaking so loud, was to persuade him that she never received suspected messages. My conjecture was true; the Marquis de Marialva commonly passed the morning in her company; and I expected a very disagreeable compliment, when this truly original actress, seeing me appear, ran to me with open arms, crying, 'Ah! my dear brother, is it you?' and with these words, embraced me several times. Then turning to her gallant, 'My lord,' said she, 'pardon me for yielding to the force of blood in your presence. After an absence of three years, I cannot behold a brother whom I tenderly love, without giving him some marks of my affection. Well, my dear Gil Blas,' continued she, addressing me anew: 'tell me some news of my family: in what condition did you leave it?'

This question embarrassed me at first; but I soon discovered Laura's intention, and seconding her artifice, answered with an air suited to the scene we had to act, 'Thank heaven, sister, our parents are in good health.' 'I don't doubt,' she replied, 'that you are astonished to find me

an actress at Grenada; but do not condemn me unheard. Three years ago, as you remember, my father thought he had settled me to advantage, by giving me in marriage to Captain Don Antonio Cœlo, who carried me from the Asturias to Madrid, where he was born. Six months after our arrival in that city, having had an affair of honour brought upon him by his own violent humour, he killed a cavalier who had taken it in his head to favour me with some attention. This gentleman being related to persons of great quality and credit, my husband, who had no interest, fled into Catalonia, with all the money and jewels he could find in the house; embarked at Barcelona, crossed into Italy, engaged in the service of the Venetians, and at last lost his life in the Morea, fighting against the Turks. In the mean time, our landed estate was confiscated, and I had but a very small jointure left. What could I do in such a troublesome extremity? I could not return into the Asturias: for what purpose go thither? all the consolation I should have received from my family, would have been no more than sympathy and condolence. On the other hand, I had been too well educated to be capable of embracing a life of libertinism. Upon what determination then could I fix? I have turned actress to preserve my character.'

The Marquis de Marialva, who lost not a word of the whole discourse, implicitly believed every syllable of what Don Antonio's widow was pleased to utter. He even joined in the conversation, and asked if I was in any business at Grenada or elsewhere. I was in some doubt, at that instant, whether or no I should tell a lie; but thinking that unnecessary, I spoke truth, recounting every

circumstance of my entering into and quitting the archbishop's service; which afforded infinite diversion to the Portuguese nobleman. It is true, that, notwithstanding my promise to Melchior, I made myself a little merry at the expense of his grace. But the most diverting part of the scene was, that Laura, who thought I had invented a story in imitation of her, burst out into loud fits of laughter, which she would have probably spared, had she known that I did not dissemble.

Having ended my narration, which I finished with the lodging I had hired, word was brought that dinner was on the table. Upon which I would have retired, in order to go and dine at my eating-house; but Laura, stopping me, said, 'What do you mean, brother! you shall dine with me: and I wont even suffer you to live any longer in a hired room; for I intend you shall both eat and lodge in my house. Order your baggage to be brought hither this evening; I have a bed to spare.'

The Portuguese nobleman, who perhaps was not very well pleased with this hospitality, addressing himself to Laura, said, 'No, Estella, you have not convenience for him in these lodgings. Your brother seems to be a pretty young fellow; and the advantage he has in being so near to you, interests me in his favour. I will take him into my service: he shall be my favourite secretary, and chief confidant. Let him not fail to come and sleep at my house this very night; for I will order an apartment to be prepared for the purpose. I will allow him a salary of four hundred ducats; and if, in the sequel, I have cause, as I hope I shall, to be satisfied with his behaviour, I

will put him in a condition to console himself for being too sincere with the archbishop.'

The acknowledgments which I made to the marquis at this juncture were followed by those of Laura, who improved upon mine. So saying, he saluted his theatrical princess, and went away. She led me immediately into a closet, where seeing herself alone with me, 'I should burst,' cried she, 'if I was obliged to resist any longer the inclination I have to laugh.' Then throwing herself into an easy chair, and holding her sides, she laughed immoderately, as if she had lost her senses. I found it impossible not to follow her example; and when we had indulged ourselves sufficiently, 'Confess, Gil Blas,' said she, 'that we have acted a pleasant farce: but I did not expect such a catastrophe; my design being no other than to provide for you a table and lodging in my house; which that I might offer with decency, I made thee pass for my brother. I am ravished that such a good post has occurred to thee by accident. The Marquis de Marialva is a generous nobleman, who will even exceed his promise in thy favour. Another,' added she, 'might not, perhaps, have given such a gracious reception to one who quits his friends without bidding them farewell: but I am one of those good creatures, who cannot help seeing again, with pleasure, a rogue whom they have once loved.' I candidly acknowledged my impolite behaviour, for which I asked pardon. She then conducted me into a very handsome dining-room, where we sat down at table; and, as a waiting-woman and lackey were present, behaved to one another like brother and sister.

Having dined, we went back to the same closet

where we had conversed together before. There my incomparable Laura, giving a loose to all her natural gayety, demanded an account of all my adventures since our separation. I made a faithful recital of the whole; and when I had gratified her curiosity, she gave me the same satisfaction, in recounting the following history of herself.

CHAPTER VII.

The history of Laura.

'I AM going to relate, as succinctly as I can, by what accident I embraced the profession of a player:

'Great events happened, after you left me in such an honourable manner. My mistress Arsenia, rather tired than disgusted with the world, renounced the stage, and carried me with her to a fine estate which she had bought near Zamora, with the price of her favours. In this city we soon contracted an acquaintance; and going thither frequently, to pass a day or two, came back again, and shut ourselves up in our castle.

'In one of these small journies, Don Felix Maldonado, the corregidor's only son, saw me by accident, and happening to be pleased with my appearance, sought an opportunity of speaking with me in private; which, that I may conceal nothing from thee, I own, was facilitated by myself. He was a cavalier not yet twenty years old, fair as Love himself, a perfect model in shape, and still more engaging by his gallant and generous behaviour than by his person; for he made me an offer of a large brilliant which he had on

his fingers with such a good grace, and pressing intreaties, that I could not, for my soul, refuse it. I did not possess such an amiable gallant with indifference. But what madness is it in Abigails to attach themselves to the young heirs of persons in authority! his father, the most severe of all corregidors, informed of our correspondence, made haste to prevent the consequences of it, and ordered me to be apprehended by a troop of alguazils, who carried me, regardless of my cries, to the Hospital of Compassion.* There, without any other form of process, the superior ordered me to be stripped of my ring and dress, and clothed with a long gown of gray serge, girded about me with a strap of black leather, from whence a rosary of large beads hung down to my heels. This being performed, I was conducted into a hall, where I found an old monk, of an order that I did not know, who fell a-preaching penitence to me, much in the same manner as Dame Leonardo exhorted thee to patience in the cavern. He told me that I was very much obliged to those who caused me to be shut up in that place, for they had done me infinite service in rescuing me from the snares of the devil. I will frankly own my ingratitude; far from thinking myself beholden to those who had done me that good office, I loaded them with imprecations.

'Eight days I passed in afflicting myself: but on the ninth (for I counted the very minutes) my fate seemed to bear another aspect. Crossing small court, I met the steward of our house, a person who ruled with unlimited sway; the superior herself was under his command: and he ren

* The house of correctio

dered an account of his stewardship to none but the corregidor, on whom alone he depended, and whose entire confidence he enjoyed. His name was Pedro Zendono: he was born in the town of Sellesdon, in Biscay, being a tall, pale, meagre man, whose figure would have served as an excellent pattern for the picture of a rank rogue. He scarce seemed to look at the sisters; and, in short, thou never sawest such an hypocritical face, although thou hast lived in an archbishop's palace.

'Well then,' said she, 'I met this Signior Zendono, who stopped me, saying, "Daughter, be comforted, I am touched with your misfortune." He said no more, but went about his business, leaving me to make what commentaries I pleased on such a laconic text. As I believed him to be a good man, I innocently concluded, that he had taken the trouble of examining into the cause of my confinement, and finding me not guilty enough to deserve such unworthy treatment, was resolved to do me a good office with the corregidor. I was little acquainted with the Biscayen, who had quite other intentions. He then resolved in his mind the scheme of a journey, which he imparted to me a few days after. "My dear Laura," said he, "I am so much affected with your sufferings, that I am resolved to put an end to them immediately. In so doing, I know I shall embrace my own ruin: but I am no longer master of myself. I intend to take you out of prison to-morrow, and conduct you in person to Madrid; being resolved to sacrifice every thing to the pleasure of being your deliverer."

'I was ready to swoon with joy at these words of Zendono, who, judging, by my acknowledg

ments, that I longed for nothing so much as liberty, had the impudence to carry me off next day, in sight of every body, by the following stratagem. He told the superior that he had orders to bring me to the corregidor, who was at a pleasure-house, two leagues from town; and, with the utmost assurance, made me get into a post chaise with him, drawn by two good mules, which he had brought for that purpose; and attended by no other servants than a valet, who conducted the chaise, and was entirely devoted to the steward, we set out, not for Madrid, as I imagined, but towards the frontiers of Portugal, where we arrived before the corregidor of Zamora could get notice of our flight, and send the beagles of justice in pursuit of us.

'Before we entered Braganza, the Biscayen made me put on a suit of men's clothes, which he had the precaution to provide; and now looking upon me as fairly embarked with him, said to me, at the inn where we lodged, "Fair Laura, be not offended with me for bringing you into Portugal, for the corregidor of Zamora will make search for us in our native country, as two criminals to whom Spain ought not to afford a retreat. But," added he, "we can shelter ourselves from his resentment in this foreign kingdom, although it be, at present, under the dominion of the Spanish monarchy. Here we shall, at least, be more secure than in our own country. Follow, therefore, a man who adores you; and let us settle at Coimbra, where I will become a spy for the Holy Office; and under the shade of that formidable tribunal, our days will smoothly glide in ease and pleasure."

'Such a forward proposal gave me to under-

stand that I had to do with a cavalier who did not choose to redress the grievance of damsels, merely for the glory of knight-errantry. I perceived that he depended a good deal upon my gratitude, and still more upon my distress. Nevertheless, though these two considerations spoke to me in his behalf, I rejected his proposal with disdain. 'Tis true, indeed, I had two strong reasons for showing myself so reserved: I disliked his person, and distrusted his circumstances. But when, returning to the charge, he offered to wed me, as a preliminary, and showed me that his stewardship had put him in a condition to enjoy himself for a long time, I wont deny that I began to listen to his addresses. I was dazzled by the gold and jewels which he spread before me: and found, by experience, that as many metamorphoses are made by interest as by love. My Biscayen became, gradually, quite another man in my eyes; his tall withered carcass assumed the form of a fine shape; his pale complexion seemed agreeably fair; and I gave a favourable appellation to his hypocritical look. I then accepted his hand, without reluctance, in the face of heaven, which he called to witness our engagement. After this he suffered no contradiction on my part; we set out again on our travels; and, in a short time, Coimbra beheld a new family within its walls."

'My husband purchased for me some handsome clothes, adapted to my own sex, and presented me with several diamonds, among which I recollected that of Don Felix Maldonado. This discovery was sufficient to make me conceive how all the jewels I had seen were acquired, and to persuade me that I had not married a scrupulous observer of the seventh article of the decalogue.

But, considering myself as the first cause of his dexterity, I forgave him in my heart; for a woman will excuse even the bad actions which her beauty prompts the men to commit; otherwise, I should have thought him an execrable villain.

'I was pretty well satisfied with him for two or three months, during which he behaved in a gallant manner, and seemed to love me with great tenderness; nevertheless, these marks of affection were false appearances; for the rogue cheated me at last. One morning, on my return from mass, I found nothing at home but bare walls; the whole furniture, with all my baggage, was carried off; Zendono, and his faithful valet, had taken their measures so well, that, in less than an hour, the general pillage of the house had been begun and finished, in such a manner, that with the clothes only which I had on my back, and the ring of Don Felix, which was luckily on my finger, I saw myself abandoned by an ungrateful wretch, like another Ariadne. But, I assure thee, I did not amuse myself with making elegies on my misfortunes; I rather thanked heaven for having delivered me from such a wretch, who could not fail, soon or late, to fall into the hands of justice; and looked upon the days we had spent together as so much lost time, for which I would soon make myself amends. Had I been desirous of staying in Portugal, and attaching myself to some lady of fashion, I should not have wanted a place: but, whether I loved my own country, or was influenced by the force of destiny, which prepared a better fortune for me here, I resolved to return to Spain; and applying to a jeweller, who gave me ready money for my

ring, set out with an old Spanish lady, who was going in a chaise to Seville.

'This person, whose name was Dorothea, had been to visit one of her relations settled at Coimbra, and was on her return to Seville, where she lived. There was such a sympathy between her disposition and mine, that we became friends the very first day of our journey; and our mutual affection grew so strong on the road, that, on our arrival, the lady would suffer me to lodge no where but in her house. I had no cause to repent of my acquaintance, for I never knew a woman of a better charact[illegible]d one might still perceive, by her features, and the sparkling of her eyes, that in her youth many a guitar had been thrummed on her account: indeed, she was the widow of several noble husbands, and lived in an honourable manner on the jointures which she enjoyed.

'Among other excellent qualities, she had that of being very compassionate to unfortunate young women. When I imparted to her my own story, she entered warmly into my interest, and bestowed a thousand curses on Zendono. "What dogs these men are!" said she, in a tone which made me guess she had met with some steward in her way; "perfidious wretches! I know there are such villains in the world, who divert themselves in deceiving women. What I am pleased at, my dear child," added she, "is, that, according to your relation, you are no longer bound to that perjured Biscayen; if your marriage with him was good enough to secure your reputation; by way of recompense, it is also bad enough to permit you to contract a better, whenever you can find an opportunity."

'I went abroad every day with Dorothea, either to church, or to visit; and this being the way to meet with some adventure soon, I attracted the notice of several cavaliers; who, in order to sound the business, made interest with my old landlady: but some had not wherewithal to make a good settlement, and others were still minors; so that I had not the least desire of listening to any of them. One day, Dorothea and I took a whim of going to see a play at Seville;* and, upon consulting the bill, we found that the players intended to act *La famosa comedia, el Embaxador de Simismo*, composed by Lope de Vega Carpio.

'Among the actresses who appeared on the stage, I discovered my old friend Phenicia, that jolly, merry wench whom thou hast seen when she was waiting-maid to Florimonda, and with whom thou hast sometimes supped at Arsenia's house. I knew that she had not been in Madrid for two years before, but was ignorant of her being an actress. Having an eager desire of embracing her, I found the piece very tedious: but this might be the fault of the actors, who played either too ill or too well to yield me amusement; for as to me, who am a merry creature, I own

* Seville, the capital of Andalusia, in Spain, is situated in a fertile country on the river Guadalquiver, over which it has a stout bridge of seventeen boats, which joins the city to a large suburb on the other side. The compass of the city, including this suburb, is supposed to be near fourteen miles, but the wall is only eight. It is very strong, and adorned with fifteen gates and a hundred and sixty-six towers. The number of inhabitants is reckoned to amount to three hundred thousand. It has also an university, and a great number of students. Among the manufactures carried on in this city, those of the silk and silver stuffs are the most considerable. Seville is an Archbishopric of great antiquity and dignity. Its revenue amounts to a hundred and twenty thousand ducats per annum.

myself as much diverted by a player who is perfectly ridiculous, as by one who is excellent in his way

'At length the moment I waited for being arrived, that is, the end of *La famosa comedia*, my widow and I went behind the scenes, where we perceived Phenicia acting the coquet, and listening with affectation to the soft warbling of a young bird, which it seems had allowed itself to be ensnared by her declamation. She no sooner observed me, than, quitting her admirer with a courteous air, she came towards me with open arms, and loaded me with caresses. We expressed our mutual joy in seeing one another again; but the time and place not permitting us to launch out into a long conversation, we deferred it till next day, when we might discourse together more fully at her lodgings.

'The itch of talking is one of the most eager passions of women: I could not close an eye the whole night, so much did I long to engage Phenicia, and worry her with questions upon questions. God knows, I was not lazy in getting up, to repair to her lodging, according to the direction she had given me! She lived with the whole company in a large hired house; which when I entered, I met a maid-servant, who, when I desired her to conduct me to Phenicia's apartment, showed me up to a gallery, on one side of which were ten or twelve small chambers, divided from one another by partitions of deal boards only, and possessed by the joyous band. My guide knocked at a door, which Phenicia, whose tongue itched as well as mine, came and opened. Scarce did we allow ourselves time to sit, before we began to chatter. We had a severe brush, and uttered

in our turns so many interrogations, that the questions and replies succeeded one another with amazing volubility.

'After having recounted our mutual adventures, and reciprocally informed ourselves of the state of our affairs, Phenicia asked what I intended to do: I answered, that I was resolved, until something better should cast up, to enter into the service of some young lady of quality. "O fie!" cried my friend, "you joke sure! Is it possible, my dear, that thou art not yet disgusted with servitude? Art thou not tired of seeing thyself subjected to another's will; with humouring the caprices of a mistress; with hearing thyself reproached; and, in one word, with being a slave? Why wilt thou not, by my example, embrace a theatrical life? nothing can be more convenient for people of spirit, who have neither birth nor fortune; it is a situation that holds the middle place between the nobility and citizens; an unrestricted condition, free of that decorum which is so troublesome to society. Our revenues are paid in ready cash by the public, which is our bank; we live in continual mirth, and spend our money as we get it.

"The stage," added she, "is particularly favourable to women: while I lived with Florimonda, (I blush at the remembrance of it!) I was reduced to the necessity of listening to the candle-snuffers of the prince's company; not one man of fashion paid the least attention to my figure. What was the cause of this unimportance? I was not seen: the finest picture has not its effect, except in a particular light; but since I have been placed on my proper pedestal, (that is, on the stage) heavens, what a change has happened! I

see at my heels the gayest youths of all those towns through which we pass. An actress, therefore, enjoys a great deal of pleasure in her occupation: if she is prudent, I mean, if she favours one gallant only at a time, she has all the honour imaginable paid to her; her chastity is applauded, and when she changes her lover she is looked upon as a real widow who marries a second husband: nay, if a widow takes a third, she is spoken of with contempt, and said to have infringed the delicacy of her sex; whereas the actor seems to be more and more regarded, in proportion to the increase of her admirers. After she has gone through a hundred intrigues, she is still a morsel for a lord."

"To whom do you talk in this manner?" said I, interrupting her. "Do you think I am ignorant of these advantages? I have often reflected on them; and they but too much flatter the imagination of such a girl as me; I even feel an inclination for the stage; but that alone is not sufficient; talent is absolutely necessary, and I have none, for when I sometimes attempted to repeat passages of plays before Arsenia, she always found fault with my performance, so that I was disgusted at the profession." "Thou art easily discouraged," replied Phenicia; "dost thou not know that these great actresses are commonly jealous? They are afraid, in spite of all their vanity, of being eclipsed. In short, I wont take Arsenia's word for thy incapacity; she was certainly insincere: nay, I assure thee, without flattery, that thou art born for the stage; thou hast genius, a free and graceful carriage, a sweet voice, a good chest, and withal a face!—ah, baggage,

how many cavaliers wilt thou charm, if thou turnest actress?"

'She plied me with more such seducing discourse, and made me pronounce some verses, that she herself might judge of my capacity for acting: but when she heard me, it was quite another case; she overwhelmed me with applause, and preferred me to all the actresses in Madrid. After this I should have been inexcusable, had I doubted my own merit. Arsenia stood impeached and convicted of envy and insincerity; and I could not help allowing that I was an admirable subject. Two actors, who happened to come in at that instant, and before whom Phenicia obliged me to repeat the verses which I had already recited to her, were seized with a kind of ecstacy; from which they no sooner recollected themselves, than they loaded me with praise. In good earnest, had the three wagered with one another which of them should applaud me most, they could not have employed more hyperbolical expressions. My modesty was not proof against such eulogiums: I began to believe myself of some value; and thus my thoughts were turned towards the stage.

"Come on then, my dear," said I to Phenicia; "the affair is determined: I will follow thy advice, and enter into the company, provided they think well of it." My friend, transported with joy at these words hugged me in her arms; and her two comrades seemed no less delighted to find me in these sentiments. We agreed that next day I should repair to the theatre in the morning, and before the whole company assembled, show the same sample of my talent that I had exhibited to them. If I had acquired the

good opinion of those who were at Phenicia's lodgings, all the actors judged of me still more favourably when I had pronounced about twenty verses in their presence. They received me very willingly into their company; and then I was wholly engrossed by my first appearance, which, that I might render as gay as possible, I employed upon it all the money that remained from the sale of my ring; and though I had not enough to make a superb figure; I at least found means to supply the want of magnificence by a genteel taste in my dress.

'At length I appeared on the stage for the first time; and then, what thundering applause, what eulogiums was I favoured with! It is downright modesty, my friend, to say simply that I ravished the audience: one must have been witness of the noise I made at Seville to believe it. I became the discourse of the whole city; which, during three weeks, came in crowds to the playhouse, in such a manner, that the company, by this novelty, recalled the public, which had began to desert them. I began, then, in a manner that charmed every body; and this was the same thing as if I had advertised myself to be let to the highest bidder. Twenty cavaliers, of all ages, outvied one another in their proffers to me; and if I had followed my own inclination, I would have chosen him who was young and handsome: but people of our stamp ought to consult nothing but their interest and ambition, when a settlement is depending. For this reason, Don Ambrosia de Nisana, a man already old and ugly, but rich and generous, and one of the most powerful noblemen of Andalusia, had the preference. True, indeed, I made him purchase my favours at a

good price; he hired for me a grand house, which he furnished in a very magnificent manner, gave me an expert cook, two lackies, a chambermaid, and a thousand ducats for my monthly expense, over and above rich clothes, and a pretty large quantity of jewels.

'What a change was this in my fortune! My reason could not support it: I appeared to myself, all of a sudden, quite another person; and I am not surprised that there are girls who forget in a little time the meanness and misery from which they are rescued by the caprice of a man of quality. I will make a sincere confession: the applause of the public, the flattering discourse that I heard from all quarters, and the passion of Don Ambrosio, inspired me with sentiments of vanity that amounted to mere extravagance. I considered my talent as a noble title: I assumed the airs of a woman of quality; and becoming as covetous as I had before been prodigal of my smiles, resolved to limit my prospect to dukes, counts, and marquisses only.

'Signior de Nisana came to sup at my house every evening with some of his friends: and I, on my side, took care to invite the most engaging of our actresses; so that we commonly spent the best part of the night in drinking and making merry. I accommodated myself mighty well to such an agreeable life, which, however, lasted but six months. Noblemen are apt to change, otherwise they would be too amiable. Don Ambrosio forsook me, for a conquest he had made of a young creature from Grenada, who had arrived at Seville, with some charms, and the talent of disposing them to the best advantage. My affliction at his inconstancy did not last, however,

longer than four and twenty hours. I chose in his room a cavalier of two and twenty, called Don Lewis de Alcacer; to whom, in point of person, few Spaniards could be compared. Thou wilt, doubtless, ask, and thou hast reason so to do, why I took such a young nobleman for my gallant, when I knew the consequences of such a choice. But, besides that Don Lewis had neither father nor mother, and already enjoyed his estate, I must tell thee, that these consequences are not to be dreaded but by girls of a servile condition, or unhappy she-adventurers. Women of our profession are privileged persons, and not at all answerable for the effects that our charms produce. So much the worse for those families whose heirs we pillage!

'Alcacer and I attached ourselves so strongly to one another, that no mutual passion, I believe, ever equalled that with which we were inflamed. We loved with so much fury, that one would have thought we were both enchanted: and those who were acquainted with our correspondence, believed us the most happy lovers in the world; though we were, in reality, the most miserable. If Don Lewis had a person altogether amiable, he was at the same time so jealous, that he afflicted me incessantly with unjust suspicions. It was in vain for me to accommodate myself to this weakness, to constrain myself so far as not to look upon a man. His distrust, ingenious in finding out crimes to lay to my charge, rendered my caution altogether useless. Our most tender moments were always disturbed by quarrels, which it was impossible to endure. Both of us lost our patience, and we broke in a friendly manner. Wouldst thou believe it? we looked upon

the last day as the most charming of our commerce. Equally fatigued with the troubles we had undergone, we expressed the utmost joy in our mutual adieu. We were like two miserable captives, who, after a rude slavery, at last recover their freedom.

'Since that adventure, I am always on my guard against love. I will no more contract attachments that may disturb my repose: it does not become those of our profession to sigh like other people; and we ought not to entertain in private a passion, the ridicule of which we represent in public.

'About this time I afforded some employment to Fame, which reported every where that I was an inimitable actress. On the assurance of this goddess, the players of Grenada wrote to me, proposing that I should enter into their company; and, to let me know that the proposal was not to be rejected, sent me an account of their daily expense, and the terms of their offer; from which I concluded, that it would be for my interest to comply. I accepted it, therefore, though, at bottom, I was grieved at parting from Phenicia and Dorothea, whom I loved as much as one woman is capable of loving others of her sex. I left the first busy in melting the plate of a little merchant goldsmith, who, out of vanity, would have an actress for his mistress. I forgot to tell thee, that when I devoted myself to the stage, I changed, through whim, my name from Laura, into that of Estella, under which appellation I set out for Grenada.

'Here my first appearance was no less lucky than at Seville, and I saw myself at once surrounded by admirers; but being resolved to

favour none except in an honourable way, I behaved to them with so much reserve, that they were blinded by my affected modesty. Nevertheless, that I might not be the dupe of a conduct that would be of no service, and which indeed was not natural to me, I was going to listen to a young judge, of the citizen race, who assumed the nobleman by virtue of his office, a sumptuous table, and rich equipage, when I saw, for the first time, the Marquis de Marialva. This Portuguese lord, who travels through Spain out of curiosity, stopped on his way at Grenada; and coming to the play one night, when I did not act, considered with great attention the actresses who presented themselves, and found one to his liking. He made an acquaintance with her the very next day, and was ready to conclude the bargain, when I appeared on the stage. My figure, and the air I gave myself, turned the weathercock all on a sudden, and my Portuguese attached himself to me only. To confess the truth, as I was not ignorant that my comrade had pleased that nobleman, I spared nothing to deprive her of her conquest; and I had the good fortune to accomplish it. I know that she bears me a grudge for my success, but I could not help doing it; and she ought to consider it as a thing so natural to women, that the best friends make no scruple of practising it on one another.'

CHAPTER VIII.

The reception which Gil Blas met with from the players of Grenada, and his finding an old acquaintance behind the scenes.

LAURA had no sooner finished her story, than an old actress who lived in the neighbourhood, came to take her up in her way to the playhouse. This venerable stage-heroine would have been very proper for playing the part of the goddess Cotys. My sister did not fail to present her brother to this superannuated figure; upon which a great many compliments passed on both sides.

I left them together, telling the steward's widow, that I would rejoin her at the theatre, as soon as I ordered my baggage to be carried to the Marquis de Marialva's house, to which he gave me a direction. I went immediately to my own room; from whence, after having satisfied my landlady; I repaired, with a man who carried my portmanteau, to a large furnished house where my new master lodged. I met at the door his steward, who asked me if I was not Dame Estella's brother; and, upon my answering in the affirmative, said, 'Signior Cavalier, you are very welcome: the Marquis de Marialva, whose steward I have the honour to be, has ordered me to give you a handsome reception. There is a chamber prepared for you, to which, if you please, I shall show you the way.' So saying, he carried me to the top of the house, and showed me into a chamber so small, that a very narrow bed, a chest, and two chairs, quite filled it.

This was my apartment. 'You wont be very much at large in this place,' said my guide; 'but, to make you amends, you shall be lodged in a superb manner at Lisbon.' I locked my portmanteau in my chest, put the key in my pocket, and asked at what hour they supped. I was answered that the Portuguese nobleman kept no table at home, but gave a certain monthly sum to each domestic for his board. I put other questions to him, and learned, that the people belonging to the marquis were a parcel of happy sluggards. After a short conversation, I left the steward to go in quest of Laura, agreeably engrossed with the presage I had conceived of my new place.

As soon as I arrived at the playhouse door, and told that I was Estella's brother, I was immediately admitted. You might have seen the guards as eager in making a passage for me, as if I had been one of the most considerable noblemen of Grenada. All the servants and doorkeepers whom I met, made me profound bows. But what I wish I could paint to the reader, was my serio-comical reception behind the scenes, where I found the company all dressed, and ready to begin. The actors and actresses, to whom Laura presented me, poured upon me in shoals. The men overwhelmed me with embraces; and the women, in their turns, applying their painted faces to mine, covered it with white and red. Each desirous of being first to make their compliment, they spoke altogether; it was impossible for me alone to answer; but my sister came to my assistance, and her indefatigable tongue did not leave me in debt to any one.

The embraces of the actors and actresses did not suffice; for I was also obliged to undergo the

civilities of the scene-painter, the music, prompter, candle-snuffer, and his deputy; in short, of all the servants of the theatre, who, on the report of my arrival, came running to behold me. One would have thought that all these people were foundlings, who had never seen a brother before.

Meanwhile the performance begun; and some gentlemen, who were behind the scenes, ran to their places: while I, like a child of the house, continued to converse with those of the actors who were not on the stage. Among these, I heard one called Melchior: I was struck with the name; I considered with attention the person who bore it, and imagined I had seen him somewhere. I at length recollected him to be Melchior Zapata, that poor stroller, who, as I observed in the first volume of my history, soaked crusts of bread in a spring.

Taking him aside accordingly, 'I am mistaken,' said I, 'if you are not that Signior Melchior with whom I had the honour to breakfast one day at the side of a clear spring between Valladolid and Segovia. I was in company with a journeyman barber; we had some provisions in a knapsack, which, being joined to yours, made up a pretty little repast, which was seasoned with a thousand agreeable sallies.' Zapata, having mused some minutes, answered, 'You mention a circumstance which I recall without difficulty; I was then returning to Zamora, from having made an unsuccessful attempt on the stage at Madrid; I remember too, that I was in very bad circumstances.' 'I remember the same thing,' said I, 'by this token, that you wore a jacket lined with playbills. You see I have not forgot it, no more than

that you complained at that time of having too chaste a wife.' 'Oh, I have no cause to complain of that at present!' said Zapata, with precipitation; 'egad! my gossip is very much reformed in that particular, and therefore my jacket is better lined than formerly.'

I was going to congratulate him on his wife's reformation, when he was obliged to leave me, in order to appear upon the stage. Curious to know his spouse, I made up to an actor, and desired he would show her to me. This he did, saying, 'There she is; that is Narcissa, the handsomest of our ladies, your sister excepted.' I immediately concluded, that this actress must be she in favour of whom the Marquis de Marialva had declared himself, before he had seen Estella; and my conjecture was but too true. When the play was over, I conducted Laura to her lodging, where I perceived several cooks preparing a great entertainment. 'Thou mayest sup here,' said she. 'I wont indeed,' said I; 'the marquis, perhaps, will choose to be alone with you.' 'O, not at all!' she replied; 'he is to be here with two of his friends, and one of our gentlemen; and it is in thy own option to make a sixth. Thou knowest that in the houses of actresses, secretaries have the privilege of eating with their masters.' 'True,' said I; 'but it would be a little too early for me to put myself on the footing of a favourite secretary: I must first enjoy his confidence, before I can merit that honourable privilege.' So saying, I left her; and repaired to my eating-house, which I intended to frequent every day, since my master kept no table at home.

CHAPTER IX.

He supped that evening with an extraordinary man: account of what happened between them.

I OBSERVED in the hall a kind of old monk, clothed in coarse gray cloth, who was at supper all alone in a corner. Sitting down, out of curiosity, just opposite to him, I saluted him very civilly, and he showed himself no less polite. My pittance being brought, I began to despatch it with a good deal of appetite; and while I eat in silence I frequently looked at this person, whose eyes I always found fixed on mine. Fatigued with his stubborn perseverance in looking at me, I addressed him in these words: 'Father, have we ever seen one another before? You observe me as if I was not altogether unknown to you.'

He answered with great gravity, 'My reason for fixing my eyes upon you, is to admire the prodigious variety of adventures which are marked in the features of your face.' 'I see,' said I, with an air of raillery, 'that your reverence deals in metoposcopy.' 'I may boast of possessing that art,' replied the monk; 'and of having made presages which have been verified by the event. I am also skilled in chiromancy, and will venture to say, that my oracles are infallible, when I have compared the inspection of the hand with that of the face.'

Although this old man had all the appearance of a wise person, I thought him so foolish, that I could not help laughing in his face. Instead of being offended, he smiled at my unpoliteness,

and continued speaking in these words, after having cast his eyes around the hall, to be assured that nobody listened: 'I am not surprised to see you so prejudiced against two sciences which are looked upon as frivolous in this age. The long and painful study which they demand discourages all the learned men, who renounce and decry them, out of despair of acquiring them. For my own part, I am not discouraged by the obscurity in which they are shrouded, no more than by the difficulties which incessantly occur in the search of chemical secrets, and in the wonderful art of transmuting metals into gold.

'But I don't consider,' added he, recollecting himself, 'that I speak to a young cavalier, to whom my discourse must in effect appear quite chimerical. A sample of my skill will dispose you much better than all I can say to judge more favourably of my art.' With these words, he took out of his pocket a phial full of red liquor; and then said, 'Here is an elixir which I composed this morning of the juice of certain plants distilled in an alembic; for I have employed almost all my life, like Democritus, in finding out the properties of minerals and simples. You shall see its virtue put to the proof. The wine which we now drink to supper, though it is execrable, shall become excellent.' So saying, he put into my bottle two drops of his elixir, which rendered my wine more delicious than the best that is drank in Spain.

The marvellous strikes the imagination; and when once that is gained, the judgment is no longer used. Charmed with such a fine secret, and persuaded that he must be more than the devil that could find it out, I cried, in a trans-

port of admiration, 'Oh, father! pray pardon me, if I took you at first for an old fool; I now do justice to your capacity, and need no more than I have seen to be assured, that you could, if you pleased, convert, in an instant, a bar of iron into an ingot of gold. How happy should I be, could I possess such an admirable science!'—'Heaven preserve you from such an acquisition,' said the old man, interrupting me with a profound sigh: 'you don't know, my son, what a secret you wish for.. Instead of envying, rather pity me, for having bestowed so much pains to make myself unhappy. I live in continual disquiet. I am afraid of being discovered, and that my labours will be rewarded by perpetual imprisonment. In this apprehension I lead a wandering life, disguised sometimes like a priest or monk, and sometimes like a peasant or cavalier. Is it then an advantage to know how to make gold at that price? and are not riches a real punishment for those persons who cannot enjoy them in tranquillity?"

This discourse seeming to me very sensible, I said to the sage, 'There is nothing like a quiet life; you give me a disgust at the philosopher's stone; and I will be contented with learning of you the future events of my life.' 'With all my heart, child,' answered he; 'I have already made my remarks on your features; let me now see your hand.' I presented it to him with a confidence that will not do me much honour in the opinion of some readers; and he having examined it with great attention, exclaimed, in a fit of enthusiasm, 'Ah! what transitions from grief to joy, and from joy to grief! what capricious successions of misfortune and prosperity! But you have already experienced a great deal of these vicissitudes.

You have not a great many more afflictions to undergo; and a nobleman will confer upon you an agreeable destiny, not subject to change.' After having assured me, that I might depend on this prediction, he bade me farewell, and went out of the eating-house, leaving me quite engrossed with the things which I had heard. I did not at all doubt that the Marquis de Marialva was the nobleman in question; and, of consequence, nothing seemed more possible than the accomplishment of the oracle. But though I had not seen the least appearance of probability, I could not have helped reposing an entire belief in the pretended monk, so much authority had he acquired in my opinion by his elixir. On my side, that I might hasten the happiness that was predicted to me, I resolved to attach myself to the marquis more than I had done to any of my masters; and having formed this resolution, I retired to our house in a transport of joy that I cannot express. Never did a woman leave a fortune-teller with more satisfaction.

CHAPTER X.

The commission that the Marquis de Marialva gave to Gil Blas, and the manner in which that faithful secretary acquitted himself of it.

The marquis was not yet come home from the lodgings of his actress; and I found his valets de chambre playing at primero in his apartment, expecting his return; I made up to them, and we

amused ourselves in making merry till two o'clock in the morning, when our master arrived. He was a little surprised to see me, and said with a gracious air, which made me guess that he returned very well satisfied with his evening's pleasure: 'How, Gil Blas! not yet abed?' I answered that I was first willing to know what orders he had for me. 'I shall, perhaps,' resumed he, 'give you a commission to-morrow morning; but it will be time enough then to tell you the particulars. Meanwhile, you may go to rest; and henceforth remember, that I dispense with your attendance in the evening, having occasion for nobody but my valets de chambre.'

After this explanation, which at bottom gave me a good deal of pleasure, since it spared me a piece of subjection which I should have sometimes felt in a very disagreeable manner, I left the marquis in his apartment, and retiring to my garret, went to bed; but having no inclination to sleep, it came into my head that I should follow the advice which Pythagoras gives us, of recollecting at night all that we have done in the day, in order to applaud our good, and condemn our bad actions.

I did not find my conscience clear enough to be satisfied with my conduct; but reproached myself with having supported the imposture of Laura. In vain did I suggest as an excuse, that I could not in honour give the lie to a girl, who had nothing in view but to do me a pleasure; and that in some shape, I found myself under a necessity of being an accomplice in the cheat. Little satisfied with this apology, I answered, that I ought not, then, to have pushed things so far; and that I must have a great deal of impu

dence to live with a nobleman, whose confidence I so ill repaid. In short, after a severe examination, I concluded, that if I was not a rogue, I was next kin to one.

From thence passing to the consequences, I represented to myself that I played a very high game, in deceiving a man of quality; who, for my sins, would perhaps soon discover the trick. A reflection so judicious, terrified me not a little; but the ideas of pleasure and interest soon dissipated my fear: besides, the prophecy of the man with the elixir would have been sufficient to remove my doubts. I gave myself up, therefore, to the most agreeable fancies: I formed new rules of arithmetic, to reckon within myself the sum to which my wages would amount at the end of ten years' service. To this I added the gratifications which I should receive from my master; and measuring them by his liberal disposition, or rather by my own desires, I had an intemperance of imagination, (if I may be allowed the expression) which set no bounds to my fortune; I was gradually lulled by so much wealth, and fell asleep in the very act of building castles in Spain.

Next day I got up at eight o'clock in the morning, to go and receive my patron's orders; but as I opened the door to go out, I was very much surprised to see him appear before me all alone, in his night-cap and morning-gown. 'Gil Blas,' said he, 'last night when I left your sister, I promised to be with her this morning; but an affair of consequence hinders me from keeping my word. Go, and assure her from me, that I am very much mortified at the disappointment; and tell her, I shall certainly sup with her in the evening. This is not all,' added he, putting into

my hand a purse with a little shagreen box enriched with diamonds; 'carry this my picture to her, and keep this purse, of fifty pistoles, which I give as a mark of the friendship I have already conceived for you.' I took the picture with one hand, and the purse I so little deserved with the other; and running instantly to Laura, cried, in the excess of joy with which I was transported, 'Good! the prediction is visibly accomplishing. What a happiness it is to be the brother of such a handsome and gallant girl! What a pity it is that there is not as much honour as profit and pleasure in it!'

Laura, contrary to the custom of people of her profession, being used to rise early, I surprised her at her toilet; where, in expectation of the Portuguese, she joined to her natural beauty all the auxiliary charms which the art of coquetry could bestow. 'Amiable Estella!' said I to her when I entered, 'the loadstone of strangers! I may now sit at table with my master, since he has honoured me with a commission which gives me that prerogative, and of which I come to acquit myself. He cannot have the pleasure of your company this morning, as he proposed; but, for your consolation, will sup with you at night; and he sends you his picture, which, to me, seems a matter of still greater consolation.'

I accordingly gave her the box, which, by the bright sparkling of the diamonds that adorned it, infinitely rejoiced her eye-sight. She opened it, and shutting it again, after having considered the painting superficially, returned to the stones, whose beauty she extolled, saying with a smile, 'These are copies which we women of the stage value more than originals.'

I then told her that the generous Portuguese, when he entrusted me with the picture, had gratified me with a purse of fifty pistoles. 'I congratulate thee upon thy good fortune,' said she to me: 'this nobleman begins where others even rarely end.' 'To you, my dear creature,' I replied, 'I owe this present: the marquis bestowed it upon me solely on account of my being your brother.' 'I wish,' said she, 'that he would give you as much every day; for I cannot express how dear thou art to me. The very first moment I saw thee, I attached myself to thee, by a tie too strong for time to break. When I lost thee at Madrid, I did not despair of finding thee again; and yesterday, when I saw thee, received thee as a man whom fate had brought back to my arms. In a word, my friend, heaven has destined us for one another: thou shalt be my husband; but we must first enrich ourselves: I want to have two or three more intrigues to make thee easy for life.'

I thanked her in a polite manner for the trouble she intended to take on my account; and we insensibly engaged in a conversation that lasted till noon. Then I retired, to give an account to my master of the manner in which his present was received; and though Laura had given me no instructions on that subject, I did not fail to compose by the way a fine compliment, which I intended to repeat in her name. But when I went home, I was told that the marquis was gone out; and it was decreed that I should see him no more; as may be perceived in reading the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Gil Blas receives a piece of news which is like a thunderbolt to him.

I REPAIRED to my eating-house, where, meeting two men of very agreeable conversation, I dined and sat at table with them till it was time to go to the play. Then we parted; they went about their own affairs, and I took the road to the theatre. I must observe, by the bye, that I had all the reason in the world to be in good humour; mirth had reigned in my conversation with these two gentlemen; my fortune wore a most smiling face: nevertheless my spirits sunk, without my knowing the reason, and without my being able to keep them up. It was, doubtless, a presage of the misfortune with which I was threatened.

As I entered the green-room, Melchior Zapata came to me; and, telling me softly to follow him, carried me into a private place, and addressed me in this manner: 'Signior Cavalier, I think it my duty to give you a very important piece of intelligence. You know that the Marquis de Marialva had, at first, a passion for Narcissa, my wife; and had already appointed a day to come and take a slice of my rib, when the artful Estella found means to break the bargain, and allure the Portuguese nobleman to her own charms. You may well believe that an actress does not lose such a good prey without vexation. My spouse has this affair at heart, and is capable of undertaking any thing to be revenged: she has now a fair occasion. Yesterday, if you remember, all

our servants crowded to see you; when the under-candle-snuffer told some of the company, that he knew you very well, and that you was nothing less than Estella's brother.

'This report,' added Melchior, 'reached the ears of Narcissa; who did not fail to interrogate the author, and he has confirmed his assertion, by telling her, that he knew you Arsenia's valet, at the same time that Estella, under the name of Laura, served that actress at Madrid. My wife, charmed with that discovery, will impart it to the Marquis Marialva, who is to be at the play this evening. Take your measures accordingly; if you are not actually Estella's brother, I advise you, as a friend, and on account of your old acquaintance, to provide for your safety. Narcissa, who demands but one victim, has allowed me to give you this notice, that you may prevent any sinister accident by immediate flight.'

It would have been superfluous in him to say more of the matter. I thanked the stage player for his information; and he easily perceived, by my terrified look, that I was not the man to give the candle-snuffer the lie. I did not feel the least inclination to depend upon my effrontery: I was not even tempted to bid Laura farewell, lest she should have insisted upon my facing it out. I could very well conceive that she was an actress of such skill, as to be able to extricate herself out of the dilemma; but I saw nothing except an infallible chastisement for me, and I was not so much in love as to brave it. My sole study being, therefore, to escape with my household goods, (I mean my baggage) I disappeared from the play-house in a twinkling, and with the utmost despatch caused my portmanteau to be

transported to the house of a carrier, who was to set out for Toledo at three o'clock next morning. I could have wished to be with the Count de Polan, whose house seemed my only asylum; but I was not yet there; and I could not, without the utmost uneasiness, think on the time I had to stay in a city where I was afraid they would search for me even in the night.

I did not, for all that, omit going to supper at my eating-house, although I was as much disturbed as a debtor who knows that there are bailiffs at his heels. What I ate that evening did not, I believe, produce excellent chyle in my stomach. Being the miserable sport of fear, I examined every body that came into the hall; and when, unluckily, any ill-looking fellow entered, (a common case in these places) I shivered with dread. Having supped in the midst of continual alarms, I rose from table, and returned to the carrier's house, where I threw myself on a truss of fresh straw, and lay till the hour of our departure.

Meanwhile, my patience was sufficiently exercised. I was attacked with a thousand disagreeable reflections: when I chanced to slumber, I beheld the furious marquis mangling the fair face of Laura with blows, and demolishing every thing in her house; or heard him order his servants to make me perish under the bastinado. Then starting, I awoke; and though to wake is usually a great comfort after such a terrible dream, waking was to me more dreadful than the dream itself. Happily for me, the carrier delivered me from my affliction, by giving me notice that his mules were ready. I was immediately a-foot; and, thank heaven! set out radically cured of

chiromancy and Laura. In proportion as we moved from Grenada, my mind resumed its tranquillity; and I began to enter into conversation with the carrier. I laughed at some pleasant stories he recounted, and lost, insensibly, all my fear. I enjoyed a sound sleep at Ubeda, where we lay the first night, and on the fourth arrived at Toledo.

My first care was to ask a direction for the Count de Polan's house, whither I repaired, very well persuaded that he would not suffer me to lodge in any other place: but I reckoned without my host; for I found nobody at home but the house-keeper, who told me that his master had set out in the evening for the castle of Leyva, having received a message that Seraphina was dangerously ill.

I did not expect the absence of the count, which diminished the joy I felt at being in Toledo, and induced me to take another resolution. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go thither, reflecting that I might push myself forward at court, where a superior genius, I had heard, was not absolutely necessary to make a fortune. The very next day I took the advantage of a return horse for that capital of Spain; and fortune conducted me thither, in order to make me act higher parts than those which I had hitherto performed.

CHAPTER XII.

Gil Blas takes lodgings in a house where he contracts an acquaintance with Captain Chinchilla. The character of that officer; with an account of the affair that brought him to Madrid.

On my first arrival at Madrid, I fixed my habitation in a house that was let into lodgings, where lived, among other people, an old captain, who had come from the further end of New Castile, to solicit at court for a pension, which he thought he had but too well deserved. His name was Don Hannibal de Chinchilla. It was not without astonishment that I beheld him for the first time; being a man turned of sixty, of a gigantic stature, and extremely meagre. He wore a pair of thick whiskers, that curled up to his temples on each side. Over and above his want of a leg and arm, a large plaster of green silk supplied the place of one eye, and the scars of many wounds appeared on his face. These things excepted, he was pretty much like another man. Besides, he had a good deal of understanding, and still more gravity; was scrupulous in his morals; and, in particular, piqued himself on his delicacy in point of honour.

After having conversed with him two or three times, he honoured me with his confidence. I soon became acquainted with all his affairs. He recounted to me on what occasion he had left an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. What I admired in his nar-

ration of battles and sieges was, that not one gasconade escaped him, nor even a word in his own praise, though I could willingly have pardoned him for boasting of the half of himself that remained, as an indemnification for the other half that he had lost. Those officers who return from the wars safe and sound are seldom so modest.

But he told me, the thing that gave him the most concern was, that he had spent a considerable estate in his campaigns, so that now his whole fortune was reduced to about a hundred ducats a year, which was scarce sufficient to maintain his whiskers, clear his lodgings, and pay for writing his memorials: 'For, in short, Signior Cavalier,' added he, shrugging up his shoulders, 'I present one, thank God, every day, without being favoured with the least notice. One would say, that there is a wager between the prime minister and me, which of us shall first fail, I in giving, or he in receiving them. I have also had the honour to present several to his majesty; but the curate sings no better than his clerk; and, in the mean time, my castle of Chinchilla sinks into ruins for want of reparation.'

'We must despair of nothing,' said I to the captain: 'you are now perhaps on the eve of seeing all your toils and troubles repaid with interest.' 'I ought not to flatter myself with that hope,' replied Don Hannibal: 'three days are not yet elapsed since I spoke to one of the minister's secretaries; and, if I may believe what he said, I may make myself very easy.' 'And, pray, what did he say?' I replied. 'Did he pretend that you was not worthy of a recompense?' 'You shall judge,' resumed Chinchilla. The secretary told me very plainly, "Master, What-d'ye-call-um,

don't brag so much of your zeal and fidelity. You have done no more than your duty, in exposing yourself to danger in behalf of your country. The glory alone which attends brave actions is a sufficient recompense, and ought to satisfy a Spaniard in particular. You must deceive yourself, therefore, if you look on the gratification you solicit as a debt due to your valour. Provided it be granted to you, you will owe it entirely to the favour and generosity of the king, who is pleased to think himself indebted to those of his subjects who have distinguished themselves in the service of the state." You see by this,' pursued the captain, 'that I am still in his debt; and that, in all likelihood, I shall return as rich as I came.'

One naturally interests himself for a brave man in adversity. I encouraged him to persevere, and offered to write his memorials gratis. I went even so far as to offer him my purse, and to conjure him to take out of it what money he wanted. But he was none of those who never wait for a second invitation on these occasions; on the contrary, he showed himself very delicate on this point, and thanked me in a lofty manner for my good-will. He afterwards told me, that rather than be a burden to any body, he had accustomed himself, by degrees, to live so frugally, that the least nourishment was sufficient for his subsistence. This was but too true; and, therefore, he was nothing but skin and bone. That he might have no witness of his wretched repast, he used to lock himself up in his chamber at meals. I obtained of him, however, by dint of entreaty, that we should dine and sup together; and, deceiving his pride by an ingenious compassion,

ordered more victuals and liquor than I had occasion for to be brought, and urged him to eat and drink. At first, he stood upon ceremony, but at length he yielded to my entreaties. After which, becoming insensibly more bold, he, of himself, assisted me in clearing my plate, and emptying my bottle.

When he had drank four or five draughts, and reconciled his stomach to good nourishment, 'Truly,' said he, with an air of gayety, 'you are very bewitching, Signior Gil Blas; you make me do what you please; your behaviour divests me of all fear of abusing your beneficent disposition.' My captain, at that time, seemed so well rid of shame, that if I had laid hold of the opportunity of pressing him again to accept my purse, I believe he would not have refused it: but I did not put him to the trial; contenting myself with having made him my messmate, and of taking the trouble not only of writing his memorials, but also of helping him to compose them. By means of having copied homilies, I had learned to turn a period, and was become a kind of author. The old officer, on his part, piqued himself on his knowledge in composition; so that, exerting ourselves together, through emulation, we produced morsels of eloquence, worthy of the most celebrated masters of Salamanca. But in vain did each of us exhaust his genius, in sowing flowers of rhetoric in those memorials; it was no better, as the saying is, than sowing them on sand. Whatever expedient we fell upon to enhance the services of Don Hannibal, the court paid no regard to it; a circumstance that did not at all engage the old invalid to make the eulogium of those officers who ruin themselves in the field. In his last

humour he cursed his fate, and wished Naples, Lombardy, and the Low Countries, at the devil.

To complete his mortification, it happened one day that, under his very nose, a poet, introduced by the Duke d'Alva, having rehearsed, in the presence, an ode on the birth of an infanta, was gratified with a pension of five hundred ducats. I believe the maimed captain would have run mad on this occasion, had I not been at great pains to recompose him. 'What is the matter?' said I, seeing him quite beside himself; 'there is nothing in this that ought to give you uneasiness. Has it not been the privilege of poets, time immemorial, to make princes pay tribute to the muse? There is not a crowned head in the world that does not gratify one of these gentlemen with a pension; and, between you and me, these sort of rewards being generally transmitted to the knowledge of posterity, immortalize the liberality of kings; whereas the other recompenses which they bestow are often but so much loss to their reputation. How many rewards did Augustus dispense, how many pensions did he grant, of which we have not the least intimation! But the most remote posterity will always know, as we do, that Virgil received near two hundred thousand crowns from the bounty of that emperor.'

Notwithstanding all I could say to Don Hannibal, the fruits of the ode stuck in his stomach like lead; and as he could not digest it, he resolved to abandon the whole of his pursuit. But first being willing, as his last effort, to present one other memorial to the Duke of Lerma, we went together to the house of that prime minister, where we met a young man, who, having

saluted the captain, said to him, with an affectionate air, 'My dear old master, is it you? What affair has brought you hither? If you have occasion for a person of interest with his highness, pray command me; I offer you my good offices.' 'How, Pedrillo?' replied the captain; 'to hear you talk, one would imagine you enjoy some important post in this family.' 'I have, at least,' answered the young man, 'power enough to be of service to an honest country gentleman like you.' 'If that be the case,' said the officer, with a smile, 'I have recourse to your protection.' 'Tis granted,' resumed Pedrillo; 'let me know what is your business, and I promise you shall get some snips out of the minister.'

We had no sooner communicated the affair to this benevolent young fellow, than he asked where Don Hannibal lodged; in which being satisfied, he assured us that we should hear of him next day; and then disappeared, without giving us the least hint of what he intended to do, or even telling us whether or not he belonged to the Duke of Lerma. I was curious to know who his Pedrillo was, that seemed so sprightly. 'He is a young fellow,' said the captain, 'who served me some years ago; and who, seeing me in want, left me to go in quest of a better place. I don't blame him for that: it is very natural for one to change for the better. He is a wag who does not want understanding, and is as intriguing as the devil; but in spite of all his art, I don't depend a great deal upon the zeal which he has expressed in my behalf.' 'Who knows,' said I, 'but he may be of some use? If he belongs, for example, to some one of the duke's principal officers, he may have it in his power to do you service. You

are not ignorant that every thing is carried, among the great, by cabal and intrigue; that they have favourite domestics, who lead them by the nose; and these again, in their turn, are governed by their own valets.'

Next morning, Pedrillo coming to our lodgings, 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'if I did not explain myself yesterday, on the means I have of serving Captain Chinchilla, it was because we were not in a place proper for such an explanation. Besides, I was willing to sound the business, before I disclosed it to you. You must know, then, that I am the lackey and confidant of Signior Rodrigo de Calderona, the Duke of Lerma's first secretary. My master, who is very much addicted to gallantry, sups every evening with an Arragonian nightingale, that he keeps encaged near the court. She is a very handsome girl, from Albarazin, of good understanding, and sings to admiration; therefore she is called Signora Sirena. As I carry a billet-deaux to her every morning, I have just now seen her; I have proposed that she shall make Don Hannibal pass for her uncle, and, on that supposition, engage her gallant to protect him. She is willing to undertake the affair; for, besides the small advantage she foresees in it for herself, she will be extremely glad to be thought the niece of a brave gentleman.'

Signior de Chinchilla made wry faces at this proposal, and expressed a reluctance in making himself an accomplice of such a prank; and still more, in suffering a she-adventurer to dishonour his family, by saying she belonged to it. He was disgusted at it, not only on account of himself, but also perceived in it (if I may be allowed the expression) a retrospective ignominy upon all

his ancestors. This delicacy seemed very unseasonable to Pedrillo; who, being shocked at it, exclaimed, 'You jest sure, to take it in that view! You are such a set of people, you cottage squires, your vanity is quite ridiculous! Signior Cavalier,' he pursued, addressing himself to me, 'are you not surprised at the scruples he makes? Egad! it is a fine thing, indeed, to stand on such punctilios at court! Fortune is never neglected there, whatever shape it assumes.'

I approved of what Pedrillo said, and we harangued the captain so successfully, that we prevailed upon him, in spite of himself, to become Sirena's uncle. When we had gained the victory over his pride, we laid all our three heads together, in order to compose a new memorial for the minister, and it was revised, augmented, and corrected accordingly. I then wrote it out fair, and Pedrillo carried it to the Arragonian lady; who, that very evening, put it into the hands of Signior Don Rodrigo, to whom she spoke in such a manner, that the secretary believing her really the captain's niece, promised to exert himself in his behalf. A few days after, we saw the effects of this our work. Pedrillo came to our lodging with an air of triumph: 'Good news!' said he to Chinchilla; 'the king is going to make a distribution of governments, benefices, and pensions, in which you shall not be forgot. But I am ordered to ask what present you intend to make to Sirena. As for my own part, I declare I'll have nothing at all. I prefer the pleasure of having contributed towards bettering my old master's fortune, to all the gold in the world. But this is not the case with our nymph of Albarazin; she is a little jewishly inclined; when the business is to

oblige her neighbour, she would take money of her own father, so you may judge if she will refuse it from a pretended uncle.'

'Let her mention her demand,' replied Don Hannibal; 'she shall, if she pleases, have yearly one-third of the pension I obtain; and that ought to satisfy her, if the whole revenues of his Catholic Majesty were concerned in the bargain.' 'For my own part,' replied Don Rodrigo's Mercury, 'I would cheerfully rely upon your word, because I know the value of it; but you have to do with a little creature who is naturally distrustful. Besides, she would much rather have, once for all, two-thirds of the product advanced in ready money.' 'Where the devil does she think I shall find it?' cried the officer, hastily interrupting him; 'Does she think I am a money-broker? It seems you have not made her acquainted with my situation.' 'Pardon me,' replied Pedrillo, 'she knows very well that you are as poor as Job: after what I have told her, she cannot be ignorant of your circumstances. But don't give yourself any trouble about the matter; I am a man fertile in expedients. I know an old rogue of a lawyer who takes pleasure in lending his money at ten per cent. You shall make an assignment, with security, to him, before a notary, of the first year of your pension, for the like sum, which you shall acknowledge to have received from him, and which you will touch in effect, the interest included. With regard to the security, the lender will be contented with your castle of Chinchilla, such as it is; so that we shall have no dispute on that score.'

The captain protested that he would accept of the conditions, if he should be lucky enough to

have any share in the favours which were to be distributed next day. And he was not disappointed; being gratified with a pension of three hundred pistoles on a certain government. As soon as he understood this piece of news, he gave all the security that was demanded, transacted his little affairs, and returned to New Castile with some pistoles in his pocket.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gil Blas meets his dear friend Fabricius at court; their mutual joy: they repair to a certain place, where a curious conversation happens between them.

I CONTRACTED a custom of going every morning to court, where I commonly spent two or three hours, in seeing the grandees pass and repass, though they appeared there without that splendour which surrounds them in other places.

One day as I walked to and fro, and strutted through the apartments, making, like many others, a foolish figure enough, I perceived Fabricius, whom I had left at Valladolid in the service of an hospital director. What astonished me was, that he talked familiarly to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis of Santa-Cruz. Nay, these two noblemen seemed to listen to him with pleasure, and he was as well dressed as a man of quality. 'Am I not mistaken!' said I to myself. 'Can this be the son of Barber Nunnez! Perhaps it is some young courtier who resembles

him.' I did not long remain in doubt: the nobleman went away, and I accosted Fabricius. He knew me at first sight; and after having made me squeeze through the crowd with him, to get out of the apartments, 'My dear Gil Blas,' said he, embracing me, 'I am rejoiced to see you again! How art thou employed at Madrid? art thou still in service, or hast thou some post at court? Give me an account of all that has happened to thee, since thy precipitate retreat from Valladolid.' 'You ask me a great many questions at once,' said I; 'and we are not now in a proper place to relate adventures.' 'Thou art in the right,' he replied; 'we shall be more at liberty in my lodgings. Come, I will show you the way; it is not far from hence. I am quite my own master, agreeably lodged, perfectly easy in my circumstances, I am contented with my situation, and happy because I think myself so.'

I accepted the proposal, and followed Fabricius, who stopped before a very fine house, where he told me he lodged. We crossed a court, where, on one side, there was a great stair-case that led to very superb apartments, and, on the other, a small flight, equally dark and narrow, by which we ascended to the lodging he had so much extolled. It consisted of one room only, which my ingenious friend had divided into four, by thin deal boards. The first served as an anti-chamber to the second, where he lay; he had made a closet of the third, and a kitchen of the last. The chamber and anti-chamber were lined with maps, and theses of philosophy; and the furniture was suitable to this kind of hanging; consisting of a large brocade bed, very much worn; old chairs covered with yellow serge, gar-

nished with a fringe of Grenada silk of the same colour; a table with gilt feet, covered with leather that seemed to be once red, and bordered with a tinsel fringe, become black by the lapse of time; with an ebony cupboard, adorned with figures coarsely carved. He had, instead of a bureau, in his closet, a little table; and his library was composed of some books, with several bundles of paper lying on shelves, placed above one another, along the wall. His kitchen, which was conformable to the rest, contained some earthenware, and other necessary utensils.

Fabricius, after having given me time to consider his apartment, said, 'What dost thou think of my lodging and economy? an't thou enchanted with them?' 'Yes, faith,' I replied, smiling; 'I am so. Thou must have certainly played thy cards well at Madrid, to be so well furnished. Thou, doubtless, enjoyest some post.' 'Heaven forbid!' replied he; 'the business I follow is above all employments whatever. A man of fashion, to whom this house belongs, gave me a room, which I have divided into four, and furnished, as thou seest. I meddle with nothing but what gives me pleasure, and feel not the cravings of necessity.' 'Pray be more explicit,' said I, interrupting him; 'you irritate the desire I have of knowing what you do.' 'Well,' said he, 'thou shalt be satisfied. I am turned author, and have commenced wit; I write in verse as well as in prose, and am equally good at every thing.'

'Thou, a favourite of Apollo!' cried I, laughing. 'This is what I never could have divined. I should have been much less surprised to have found thee in a quite contrary situation. What charms couldst thou find in the condition of a

post? Methinks these people are commonly despised in civil life, and are far from having an established ordinary.' 'O fie!' cried he, in his turn; 'thou talkest of those miserable authors, whose works are the refuse of libraries and players. Is it to be wondered at, that such writers are not esteemed? But good authors, my friend, are on a better footing in the world; and I may say, without vanity, that I am one of that number.' 'I don't at all doubt it,' said I; 'thou art a young fellow of excellent genius; that which is composed by thee cannot be bad. All that I am at a loss to know is, how thou wast first seized with the rage of rhyme.'

'Thy surprise is just,' replied Nunnez; 'I was so well satisfied with my situation while in the service of Don Manuel Ordonnez, that I did not so much as wish for any other. But my genius rising by degrees, like that of Plantus, above servitude, I composed a comedy, which was acted by the company at Valladolid. Although it was not worth a fig, it met with great success; from whence I concluded, that the public was a good milch cow, which easily parted with its store. This reflection, joined to the furious desire of composing new pieces, detached me from the hospital. The love of poetry banished my passion for riches, and resolving to repair to Madrid, as the centre of wit, in order to form my taste, I demanded my dismission from the director, who did not grant it without regret, so much affection had he conceived for me. "Fabricius," said he, "hast thou any cause to be dissatisfied?" "No, sir," I replied; "you are the best of masters, and I am penetrated with your generosity But, you know, one must follow his destiny.

find I am born to eternize my name by works of genius." "What folly possesses thee!" resumed the good citizen; "thou hast already taken root in the hospital, and art of that kind of wood of which stewards and even directors are made. Thou art going to leave what is solid, in order to employ thyself in trifles; and thou wilt soon repent of thy imprudence, my child."

'The director, seeing that he opposed my design to no purpose, paid my wages, and over and above, made me a present of fifty ducats, as a recompense for my faithful services: so that with this, and what I found means to glean in the little commissions that were entrusted to my integrity, I was in a condition, on my arrival at Madrid, to appear in a very handsome manner. This I failed not to do; though the writers of our nation don't much pique themselves on their neat appearance. I soon became acquainted with Lope de Vega,* Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra,† and other famous authors; but, in preference to these great men, I chose for my preceptor a young bachelor of Cordova, the incomparable Don Lewis de Gongora, the finest genius that ever Spain produced. He will not allow his works to be printed in his life-time, but contents himself with reading them to his friends; and, what is very remarkable, nature has endued him with the rare talent of succeeding in all kinds of poetry. He chiefly excels in satire, which, indeed, is his main strength. He is not (like Lucilius) a muddy river

* A celebrated dramatic poet, as much admired by the Spaniards as Shakspeare is by the English. He is said to have composed eighteen hundred pieces for the stage, in verse, besides many other works.

† The renowned author of Don Quixote.

that sweeps along with it abundance of slime; but rather the Tagus, that rolls over golden sands its limpid stream.' 'Thou drawest,' said I to Fabricius, 'an agreeable picture of this same bachelor: and I don't doubt that a person of such merit has a great number of envious enemies.' 'All our authors,' he replied, 'good as well as bad, inveigh bitterly against him. "He delights," says one, "in bombast, points, metaphors, and transposition." "His verses," saith another, "are as obscure as those which the Salian priests sang in their processions, and which nobody understood." Others again find fault with his composing sometimes sonnets or romances, sometimes comedies, stanzas, and acrostics; as if he had foolishly undertaken to eclipse all the great masters in their own different ways. But all these efforts of jealousy are baffled by a muse that is cherished by all ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest.

'It was under this skilful master that I served my apprenticeship; and I dare say it has appeared: for I have so happily imbibed his genius, that I have already composed some detached pieces which he would not blush to father. I opened my ware (according to his example) in the houses of the great, where I am wonderfully well received, and have to do with people who are not difficult to please. 'Tis true, indeed, my successful beginning has been of no disservice to my later compositions. In short, I am beloved by several noblemen, and in particular live with the Duke de Medina Sidonia, as Horace once lived with Mæcenas. You see,' added Fabricius, 'in what manner I was metamorphosed into an author. I have nothing else to relate; so that it

is now thy turn, Gil Blas, to rehearse thy exploits.'

I opened accordingly; and suppressing every trivial circumstance, gave him the detail he desired: after which, it being dinner-time, he took out of his ebony cupboard a couple of napkins, some bread, the remains of a shoulder of roast mutton, a bottle of excellent wine, and we sat down at the table with all the gayety of two friends who meet after a long separation. 'Thou seest,' said he, 'my free and independent life: I might, if I would, go and dine every day with the people of quality; but, besides that the poetic inclination keeps me oftentimes at home, I am a sort of an Aristippus, and can equally accommodate myself to company and solitude, to affluence and frugality.' We liked the wine so well, that there was a necessity of taking another bottle from the store; and, towards the end of the repast, I expressed a desire of seeing some of his productions. He immediately searched among his papers for a sonnet, which he read aloud with great emphasis. Nevertheless, in spite of the charms of his reading, I found the performance so obscure, that I could not comprehend the meaning of one syllable. Perceiving my ignorance, 'This sonnet,' said he, 'does not seem very clear to thy apprehension; is it not so?' I owned to him that I could have wished it had been more plain. Upon which he fell a laughing at my expense. 'If this sonnet,' he resumed, 'is not intelligible, so much the better. The natural and simple wont do for sonnets, odes, and other works that require the sublime. The sole merit of these is in their obscurity; and it is sufficient if the poet himself thinks he understands them.' 'You joke,

friend!' said I, interrupting him; 'good sense and perspicuity ought to be ingredients in poetry of all kinds whatever; and if thy incomparable Gongora writes not more plainly than thou dost, I confess my opinion of him sinks apace. He must be a poet who can never deceive any other age than his own. Let us now have a specimen of thy prose.' Hereupon, Nunnez produced a preface, which (he said) he intended to prefix to a collection of comedies that he had then in the press; and, having read it, asked my opinion. 'I am,' said I, 'no better pleased with thy prose than with thy poetry: Thy sonnet is a piece of verbose fustian; and thy preface is composed of far-fetched expressions, words that have not the public stamp, perplexed phrases; in a word, thy style is quite peculiar to thyself; and the books of our best authors, ancient as well as modern, are written in a quite different manner.' 'Poor ignoramus!' cried Fabricius; 'thou dost not know, then, that every prosaic writer who now aspires at the reputation of a delicate pen, affects that singularity of style, and those odd expressions, which shock thee so much. There are of us five or six bold innovators, who have undertaken to make a thorough change in the language; and we will accomplish it (please God!) in spite of Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and all the fine geniuses who cavil at our new modes of speech. We are seconded by a number of partizans of distinction, and have even some theologicians in our cabal.

'After all,' added he, our 'design is commendable; and, prejudice apart, we are more valuable than those natural writers who speak like the common run of mankind. I don't know for what reason they are esteemed by so many

persons of honour. Their manner was proper enough to Athens or Rome, where there was no distinction in point of speaking; so that Socrates said to Alcibiades, the people was an excellent schoolmaster; but at Madrid, we have both a good and a bad language, and our courtiers express themselves quite otherwise than our citizens, believe me. In short, our new style overtops that of our antagonists. I will, by one example, make thee perceive the difference between the gentility of our diction, and the flatness of theirs. They would say, quite plainly, for instance, "Interludes embellish a comedy:" while we, with more spirit, would pronounce, "Interludes create beauty in a comedy." Take notice of that; *create beauty*. Dost thou perceive all the brilliancy, all the delicacy, all the prettiness, of the expression?"

I interrupted my innovator with a loud laugh. 'Go, Fabricius,' said I, 'thou art quite an original with this thy precious language.' 'And thou,' answered he, 'art no better than a beast, with thy natural style. Go,' said he, repeating the words of the Archbishop of Grenada; 'go and tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats; and heaven direct you with that sum! Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas; I wish you a great deal of good fortune, with a little more taste!'

I redoubled my mirth at this sally; and Fabricius, forgiving me for having spoke so irreverently of his writings, lost nothing of his good humour. We finished our second bottle; and, getting up from table in a pretty good trim, went out with a design to walk in the Prado; but, passing by the door of a tavern, we took it in our heads to go in.

This place was usually frequented by good

company; and I observed in two separate halls, a great many cavaliers amusing themselves with different diversions. In one, they played at drafts and primero; and, in the other, ten or twelve persons were listening very attentively to a dispute between two professed wits. We had no occasion to go near them, in order to learn that a metaphysical proposition was the subject of their dispute; for they talked with such warmth and transport, that they looked like people possessed. I imagine, if Eleazar's ring* had been put under their noses, we should have seen devils issue with their breath. 'Good God!' said I to my companion, 'what passion! what lungs! These disputants were certainly born to be public criers. The greatest part of mankind are misplaced.' 'Yes, truly,' he replied; 'these people seem to be of the race of Novius,† that Roman banker, whose voice exceeded the noise of carmen. But,' added he, 'what gives me the greatest disgust at their discourse is, that our ears are stunned to no purpose.' We removed at a distance from those vociferous metaphysicians, and by that expedient I prevented a violent head-ache which had begun

* Eleazar was a famous magician, who cast out devils, by affixing to the nose of the possessed a certain mystical ring which the demon no sooner smelled, than he abandoned the patient. In performing before the Emperor Vespasian, he commanded the devil to overset a pitcher of water, which the demon immediately complied with, to the astonishment of the spectators.

† Novius, from being a slave, came to be a rich citizen of Rome, and turned usurer: which infamy Horace has perpetuated, and has also immortalized the loudness of his voice, in the sixth Satire of his first book.

——— *At hic si plaustra ducenta*
Concurrentque foro tria funera magna sonabit,
Cornua quod, vincatque tubas.

to seize me. We went and sat down in the corner of the other hall, whence, while we drank refreshing liquors, we examined the cavaliers as they came in and went out. As Nunnez knew almost all of them, 'Egad!' cried he, 'the dispute of our philosophers wont be soon over; here are fresh reinforcements arriving; these three men will engage in the fray. But seest thou these two originals going out? That little, swarthy, withered creature, whose lank straight hair falls down in equal portions before and behind, is called Don Julien de Vellanunno, and is a young judge who affects the beau. One of my friends and I, going to dine with him t'other day, surprised him in a pretty singular occupation. He was diverting himself in his closet, by throwing away the writings of a process of which he is to make a report, and making a greyhound bring them back again to him, while the dog tore them to pieces very handsomely. The name of that licentiate with the copper nose, who accompanies him, is Don Cherubin Tonto, a canon of the church of Toledo, the weakest mortal in the world; though by his sprightly smiling air, you would imagine he had a great deal of wit. He has bright sparkling eyes, with an arch malicious sneer: so that one would be apt to think him a wag. When he hears a delicate performance read, he listens with such attention as seems full of understanding, and all the while comprehends nothing at all of the matter. He dined with us at the judge's house, where an infinite number of witty things were said; but he spoke never a word, though he applauded them with grimaces and gestures that seemed even superior to the sallies that were uttered.'

'Dost thou know,' said I to Nunnez, 'these two shabby fellows who, with their elbows on the table, sit in a corner, and converse together in whispers?' 'No!' said he, 'their faces are quite unknown to me; but in all likelihood they are coffee-house politicians who censure the government. Mark that genteel cavalier, who whistles as he walks through the hall, and supports himself sometimes on one foot, sometimes on another; that is Don Augustin Moreto, a young poet, who was born with some genius, but flatterers and ignorant people have almost turned his brain. The man whom he accosts is one of his confederates, who is also moon-struck, and rhymes in prose.

'More authors still!' cried he, showing me two well-dressed men coming in; 'one would think they had made a rendezvous here, to pass in review before thee. These are, Don Bernard Desenguado, and Don Sebastian de Villa Viciosa. The first is a genius full of gall, an author born under the planet of Saturn, a malicious mortal, whose pleasure consists in hating all the world, and is himself beloved by nobody. As for Don Sebastian, he is a young fellow of candour, who will let nothing lie upon his conscience; he lately brought a performance on the stage, which had an extraordinary run; and now he has printed it, that he may no longer abuse the esteem of the public.'

The charitable pupil of Gongora was going on in explaining the figures of this picture, which shifted so often to the view, when a gentleman belonging to the Duke de Medina Sidonia came and interrupted him, saying, 'Signior Don Fabricio, I was looking for you, in order to let you know that his grace would speak with you imme-

diately at his own house.' Nunnez, who knew that a grandee's wishes cannot be too soon satisfied, quitted me in a trice, to go and wait upon his Mæcenas; while I remained very much astonished to hear him honoured with the appellation of Don, and see him thus become noble in despite of his sire, Master Chrysostom the barber.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fabricius introduces Gil Blas to the service of Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman.

I was so desirous of seeing Fabricius again, that I visited him early next morning. 'Good-morrow!' said I, when I entered, 'Signior Don Fabricio, the flower, or rather glow-worm, of the Asturian nobility!' At these words he laughed heartily. 'Thou hast observed, then,' cried he, 'that I am dubbed a Don?' 'Yes, Mr. Gentleman,' I replied; 'and give me leave to tell you, that when you recounted your metamorphosis yesterday, you forgot the best part of it.' 'I did so,' answered he; 'but truly, if I have assumed that honourable title, it was not so much with a view to gratify my own vanity, as to accommodate myself to that of others. Thou knowest the humour of the Spaniards: they make no account of an honest man, if he has the misfortune to be both poor and mean born. I must tell thee too, that I see so many people call themselves Don Francisco, Don Pedro, or Don What-you-will, that if there is no cheat in the case, thou wilt

allow nobility to be a very common thing; and agree, that a plebeian of merit honours it by his association. But let us change the subject,' added he. 'Last night I supped at the Duke de Medina Sidonia's; where, among other guests, was Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman of the first rank; and the conversation turning on the ridiculous effects of self-love, I, charmed that I had it in my power to entertain the company on that subject, regaled them with the story of the homilies. Thou mayest well imagine they laughed heartily, and censured the archbishop as he deserved. This produced no bad effect for thee, for thou wast pitied by every body; and Count Galiano, after having asked a good many questions concerning thee, to which thou mayest believe I made suitable answers, desired me to bring thee to his house. I was just now going in quest of thee, to conduct thee thither. I suppose he intends to offer thee the place of one of his secretaries; and I advise thee to accept of it. The count is rich, and spends like an ambassador at Madrid: he is come to court, it is said, to confer with the Duke of Lerma, about the crown demesnes which that minister designs to alienate in Sicily. In short, Count Galiano, though a Sicilian, seems to be generous, just, and open; and thou canst not do better than attach thyself to him; he is the man, in all probability, who is destined to enrich thee, according to what was foretold in thy behalf at Grenada.'

'I had resolved,' said I to Nunnez, 'to live at large a little, and enjoy myself a good while, before I should go to service again; but thou speakest to me of this Sicilian count in such a manner, as induces me to change my resolution, and even

to wish I was already in his family.' 'Thou mayest soon be there,' he replied, 'or I am much mistaken.' At the same time we went out together to the count, who lodged in the house of his friend Don Sancho d'Avila, then in the country.

We found in the court a great number of pages and footmen, clothed in a livery equally rich and gay; and in the anti-chamber several ushers, gentlemen, and other officers, all magnificently dressed; but withal so ugly, that they looked like a company of apes in Spanish garb. There are figures, both of men and women, on which all art is thrown away.

Don Fabricius having sent in his name, was immediately introduced into a room, whither I followed him, and found the count in his morning gown, sitting on a sopha, and drinking chocolate. We saluted him with all the demonstrations of the most profound respect; and he honoured us with an inclination of the head, accompanied by such a gracious smile, as at once gained my heart. A wonderful effect, though an ordinary one, which a favourable reception from the great produces in our breasts! They must receive us very ill indeed before we be disgusted at their behaviour.

Having drank his chocolate, he amused himself some time in playing with a large baboon that sat by him, and was called Cupid. I don't know for what reason the name of that god was bestowed on this animal, unless it was because it had all his malice; for it resembled him in nothing else. Such as it was, however, it did not fail to give vast delight to its master, who was so much charmed with its merry tricks, that he hugged it

incessantly in his arms. Though Nunnez and I were not much diverted with the gambols of this beast, we feigned ourselves enchanted with its performances; which pleased the Sicilian so much, that he suspended the pleasure he enjoyed in this pastime, to tell me, 'Friend, you have it in your option to be one of my secretaries: if you like the place, I will give you two hundred pistoles a year, without any other recommendation than that of Don Fabricio.' 'My lord,' cried Nunnez, 'I am bolder than Plato, who had not courage enough to answer for one of his friends, whom he sent to the tyrant Dionysius. I am not afraid of bringing reproaches upon myself, by vouching for my friend.'

I thanked the Asturian poet, with a low bow, for his obliging confidence; then addressing myself to my patron, assured him of my zeal and fidelity. This nobleman no sooner perceived that I relished his proposal, than he ordered his steward to be called; to whom, having communicated something in a whisper, he said, 'Gil Blas, I will tell you presently what is to be the nature of your employment. Meanwhile, you may follow my steward, who has received orders concerning you.' I accordingly obeyed, leaving Fabricio with the count and Cupid.

The steward, who was a most subtle Messineze, conducted me to his apartment, where he loaded me with civilities; and sending for the taylor who had equipped the whole family, ordered him to make for me, with all despatch, a suit of clothes of the same magnificence as those of the principal officers. The taylor having taken measure of me, and retired—'As for your lodging,' said the Messineze, 'I know a chamber that will

exactly fit you. But have you breakfasted?' added he; when I answered in the negative, 'Ah, poor lad!' said he, 'why did not you speak? Come, I will show you to a place, where, thank heaven, you may have what you will for the asking.'

So saying, he carried me down to the buttery, where we found the butler, a true Neapolitan, every whit as cunning as the Messenian. It might be said of him and the steward, '*These two make a pair.*' This honest butler, with five or six of his friends, were cramming themselves with ham, cold tongue, and other relishing bits, which obliged them to redouble their draughts. We joined these hearty cocks, and assisted them in their attacks upon the count's best wines. While this scene passed in the buttery, another such was acted in the kitchen: the cook also treated three or four tradesmen of his acquaintance, who filled their bellies with rabbit and partridge pies. The very scullions enjoyed themselves on what they could pilfer: so that I thought myself in a house abandoned to pillage. Yet these were but trifles, in comparison to what I did not see.

CHAPTER XV.

Count Galiano invests Gil Blas with an employment in his house.

I WENT to fetch my baggage to my new habitation; and when I returned, the count was at dinner with several noblemen and the poet Nunnez, who called for what he wanted with an easy air,

and mingled in the conversation. Nay, I observed that every word he spoke afforded pleasure to the company. What a fine thing is genius! A man of wit can easily turn himself into all shapes.

I dined with the officers, who were treated pretty much in the same manner as our patron; and in the afternoon retired to my chamber, where I began to reflect on my condition.

'Well, Gil Blas,' said I to myself, 'thou art now in the service of a Sicilian count, with whose real character thou art utterly unacquainted. If we may judge by appearance, thou wilt be in this family like a fish in the water: but we must swear to nothing; and thou oughtest to distrust thy fate, the malignity of which thou hast but too often experienced. Besides, thou dost not know for what employment thou art retained: he has already two secretaries and a steward; what service then does he expect from thee? It looks as if he intended to make thee his Mercury. In good time! one cannot be on a better footing with a nobleman, in order to make his way to a good post. He who limits himself to honourable services only, moves slowly, step by step, and seldom gains his point at last.'

While I was engrossed by these fine reflections, a lackey came to tell me, that all the company who had dined at our house were gone home, and that the count wanted to speak with me. I flew instantly to his apartment, where I found him lying on his couch, ready to take his afternoon's nap, with his baboon, which always bore him company.

'Come hither, Gil Blas,' said he; 'take a chair, and listen to what I am going to say.' I obeyed his orders, and he spoke to me in these terms:

'Don Fabricio has told me, that, among other good qualities, you possess that of attaching yourself to your masters; and that you are a young man of incorruptible integrity. These two qualifications determined me to take you into my service; for I have great occasion for an affectionate domestic, who will espouse my interest, and employ his whole attention in husbanding my estate. I am rich, it is true; but my yearly expense greatly exceeds my income. The reason is plain; I am plundered by my servants, and live in my own house as if I was in a forest among robbers. I suspect my butler and steward of having a fellow-feeling one with the other; and this is more than enough to ruin me from top to bottom. You will say, if I have reason to think them rogues, why don't I turn them away? But where shall I find others made of a different kind of stuff? I will be satisfied with having them both observed by a man who shall have a right to inspect their conduct: and you are the person whom I have chosen for that commission; of which, if you acquit yourself well, be assured that you shall not serve an ungrateful master, for I will take care to procure for you a very advantageous settlement in Sicily.'

Having spoke thus, he dismissed me; and that very evening, in presence of all his domestics, I was proclaimed superintendent of the family. This did not give the Messineze and Neapolitan great mortification at first, because they looked upon me as a jolly companion, of a good composition; and concluded, that by giving me a share of the spoil, they should be allowed to go on in their old course. But they looked very silly next day, when I declared to them that I was an enemy

to all misdemeanor. I demanded of the butler an account of the provisions; I visited the cellar, and took an inventory of every thing he had in his charge; I mean table-linen and plate. I then exhorted them to be saving of our patron's wealth; to lay out with economy; and ended my advice, by protesting to them, that I would inform that nobleman of every thing that I should observe amiss in his house. I did not stop here: resolving to have a spy, who might discover if there was any sinister intelligence between them, I cast my eyes on a scullion; who, being won by my promises, assured me that I could not have applied to a more proper person, to get notice of every thing that happened in the house; that the butler and steward were in a confederacy, and burnt the candle at both ends; that they daily secreted one-half of the provision that was bought for the family; that the Neapolitan took care of a lady who lived opposite to the college of St. Thomas; and that the Messenian entertained another at the Sungate; that these two gentlemen sent all sorts of provision to their nymphs every morning; and that the cook also despatched savoury messes to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood; and that, in consideration of his services to the other two, to whom he was entirely devoted, he disposed, as they did, of the wines in the cellar: in short, that these three domestics occasioned a most horrible expense in the count's house. 'If you doubt my report,' added the scullion, 'take the trouble of going to-morrow morning, about seven o'clock, to the college of St. Thomas, and you shall see me loaded with a basket, which will change your doubts into certainty.' 'So,' said I to him, 'thou art agent to

these gallant purveyors?' 'I am,' he replied, 'employed by the butler, and one of my comrades acts for the steward.'

I had the curiosity to repair next morning, at the appointed hour, to the college of St. Thomas, where I did not wait long for my spy, whom I saw coming along with a huge basket filled with butcher's meat, poultry, and venison. I took an inventory of the particulars, of which I formed in my pocket-book a short verbal process, that I went and showed to my master, after having told the trencher scraper that he might execute his commission as usual.

The Sicilian nobleman, who was naturally passionate, resolved in his first transport to turn away the Neapolitan and Messenian; but after having reflected more coolly, contented himself with dismissing the last, to whose place I succeeded; so that my office of superintendent was suppressed soon after its creation: and truly I was not sorry for it; for it was, properly speaking, no other than the honourable employment of a spy, and a post which had nothing substantial in it; whereas, by being made steward, I became master of the strong box, and that is every thing. The steward always possesses the first rank among the domestics of a great family; and there are so many small perquisites attached to his administration, that he may grow rich, even though he be an honest man.

My Neapolitan, whose budget was not yet exhausted, observing my brutal zeal, that I got up every morning to see and keep an account of what victuals were bought, no longer secreted a part, but the rascal continued to purchase the same quantity as before. By this stratagem

increasing the profit he drew from the refuse of the table, which was his perquisite, he found himself in a condition to treat his charmer at least with dressed victuals, if he could not furnish her with raw provision. In short, the devil lost nothing by this reformation, and the count was not a whit the better for having a phœnix of stewards in his service. The superabundance that I then perceived at every meal made me guess this new trick, which I immediately defeated, by retrenching what was superfluous in every course. This I did, however, with such prudence, that the alteration could not be perceived: one would have thought that there was still the same profusion; and yet, by this economy, I considerably diminished the expense. This was what my patron required; he wanted to retrench, without appearing less magnificent; for his avarice was subordinate to his ostentation.

There was yet another abuse to be reformed. I found the wine ran out apace: if, for example, twelve cavaliers happened to dine with my master, they would exhaust fifty, and sometimes five dozen of bottles. I was astonished at this waste; and not doubting that there must be some roguery in the case, consulted my oracle, that is, my drudge, with whom I very often had private conferences, and who made a faithful report of every thing that was said or done in the kitchen, where he was not in the least suspected. He told me, that the waste of which I complained proceeded from a new league between the butler, cook, and those lackeys who filled the wine, and who carried off all the bottles half emptied, which were afterwards shared among the confederates. I spoke to the footmen on this subject, and

threatened to turn them out of doors, if ever they should think proper to repeat this practice: upon which they were reclaimed. My master, whom I took care to advertise of the most minute things which I performed for his advantage, loaded me with praises, and grew every day more and more fond of me; and I, in order to reward the good services of the scullion, created him cook's assistant.

The Neapolitan was enraged to find me always on the catch with him; and was cruelly mortified with the checks which he underwent, whenever he presented his accounts to me; for, that I might pare his nails the closer, I took the trouble of going to market, to learn the price of meat, just before he went thither; and, as he attempted to impose upon me afterwards, gave him a vigorous repulse. I was very well persuaded, that he cursed me a hundred times a day; but the subject of his maledictions hindered me from dreading their force. I cannot imagine how he could bear my persecutions, and remain in the service of the Sicilian nobleman. Doubtless, in spite of all my endeavours, he found his account in perseverance.

Fabricio, whom I frequently saw, and to whom I recounted all my hitherto unheard exploits, in quality of steward, was more disposed to blame than to applaud my conduct. 'God grant,' said he, one day, 'that thou mayest be recompensed for all this disinterestedness; but, between thee and me, I believe it would not fare the worse with thee, if thou wast not quite so rough with the butler.' 'How!' answered I; 'shall that robber charge in his bill ten pistoles for a fish that did not cost four, and I pass over that article?'

'Why not?' he replied, coldly; 'let him give thee the half of the superplus, according to custom.' In good faith, my friend!' continued he, shaking his head, 'you are a mere ninny; and, in all appearance, will grow gray in servitude, since you neglect to flay the eel while it is in your hand. Take my word for it, Fortune resembles those brisk airy coquettes who despise the gallant who stands upon ceremony.'

I only laughed at the discourse of Nunnez; who laughed again in his turn, and would have persuaded me that he had only spoke in jest, being ashamed of having given me bad counsel in vain. I continued firm in the resolution of being always zealous and faithful: I felt no inclination to be otherwise; and I dare say, that in four months I saved to my master, by my economy, three thousand ducats at least.

CHAPTER XVI.

An accident happens to Count Galiano's Baboon, which is the cause of great affliction to that nobleman. Gil Blas falls sick; the consequence of his distemper.

About this time, the repose of the family was strangely disturbed by an accident which will seem trifling to the reader, though it turned out a very serious matter to the servants, and especially to me: Cupid, that baboon of which I have made mention, that animal so beloved by our master, attempting one day to leap from one win-

dow to another, acquitted himself so ill in the performance, that he fell down into the court, and dislocated his leg. The count no sooner understood this misfortune, than he uttered such piercing cries, that they were heard all over the neighbourhood; and in the excess of his grief, attacking all his servants without exception, he had well nigh made a clean house. His fury, however, was limited to cursing our negligences, and abusing us, without sparing terms of reproach. He sent immediately for those surgeons who were most expert in fractures and dislocated bones; and who, having visited the patient's leg, reduced it, and applied bandages accordingly. But though all of them assured him there was no danger, my master retained one of them in the house, to be always near the animal, until it was perfectly cured.

I should be to blame if I passed over in silence the grief and anxiety which preyed upon the heart of the Sicilian nobleman during the whole time of the cure. Will it be believed, that all the day he did not stir from his dear Cupid! He was always present when it was dressed, and got out of bed to visit him two or three times ever night. But the most troublesome circumstance of all was, that every domestic in the family, and I in particular, were always up, that we might be at hand to be sent wheresoever it should be thought proper for the service of this ape. In a word, we had no rest in the house, till such time as this plaguy beast, having recovered of his fall, betook himself again to his usual caperings and tumblings. After this, can we refuse to credit the report of Suetonius, when he says, Caligula loved his horse to such a degree, that he bestowed

upon him a house richly furnished, with officers to serve him, and even designed to make him consul? My patron was no less charmed with his baboon, which he would willingly have created a corregidor, had it been in his power.

An unlucky circumstance for me was, that I had surpassed all the valets in demonstrations of concern, that I might, in so doing, make my court to my master; and underwent such fatigue in behalf of Cupid, that I fell sick upon it, and was seized with such a violent fever that I lost my senses, and know not how I was managed for fifteen days, during which I was in a manner between life and death. This only I know, that my youth struggled so successfully against the fever, and perhaps against the remedies that were administered, that at length I recovered my understanding. The first use I made of it was to perceive that I was not in my own chamber; and wanting to know the reason, I asked it of an old woman who attended me; but she replied, that I must not speak, for the physician had expressly forbid it. When we are in good health, we commonly laugh at the doctor; but when we are sick, we calmly submit to his prescription.

I thought proper, therefore, to hold my tongue, how much soever I longed to converse with my nurse; and was engaged in reflections on this subject, when two spruce beaus entered, dressed in velvet, with very fine ruffled linen. I imagined they were two noblemen, friends of my master, who, out of consideration for him, came to see me. On this supposition, I made an effort to sit up, and showed my respect by taking off my cap; but my nurse laid me all along again, and told me

that these gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor coming to my bed-side, felt my pulse, considered my countenance, and observing all the symptoms of an immediate cure, assumed an air of triumph, as if he had greatly contributed to it; saying that there was nothing wanting to finish the work but a purge, after which he might boast of having performed a fine cure. When he had spoke thus, he made the apothecary write a prescription; which, while he dictated, he viewed himself in a glass, adjusted his periwig, and made such grimaces, that I could not help laughing, in spite of my weakly condition. He then made me a solemn bow, and went away, much more engrossed by his own figure than by the medicines he had prescribed.

After his departure, the apothecary, who had not come hither for nothing, prepared himself for doing something which may be easily guessed; whether he was afraid that the old woman could not acquit herself with dexterity enough, or wanted to operate himself, in order to enhance the value of his ware; but, with all his address, I do not know how it happened, the operation was scarce performed, when I restored to the operator all that he had given me, and left his velvet suit in a fine pickle. He looked upon this accident as a misfortune annexed to pharmacy, and wiping himself with a towel in silence, went away, resolving to make me pay the scourer, to whom he was certainly obliged to send his clothes.

He returned next morning more plainly dressed, though he had no risk to run that day, in bringing the physic which the doctor had pre-

scribed the night before; for I not only felt myself mending every moment, but had such an aversion, since the preceding day, to physicians and apothecaries, that I even cursed the universities where those gentlemen receive the power of slaying men with impunity.

In this disposition, I swore that I would take no more medicine, and wished Hippocrates at the devil, with all his gang. The apothecary, who did not mind what became of his composition, provided he was paid for it, left it on the table, and retired, without speaking a word. I ordered the villanous medicine to be thrown out at a window immediately, being so much prepossessed against it, that I should have thought myself poisoned had I swallowed it. To this stroke of disobedience I added another. I broke silence; and told my nurse, in a peremptory tone, that I absolutely insisted on knowing what was become of my master. The old woman, who was apprehensive of exciting in me a dangerous emotion, should she gratify my curiosity; or resolving perhaps to irritate my distemper by her obstinacy, made no answer; but I persisted with so much passion, that she replied, at length, 'Signior Cavalier, you are now your own master; Count Galiano is gone back to Sicily.'

I could not believe what I heard, and yet there was nothing more true. That nobleman, the very second day of my distemper, fearing that I would die at his house, had the generosity to order me to be transported, with my little effects, to a hired room, where he had abandoned me, without ceremony, to Providence and the care of a nurse. In the interim, having received an order from court, obliging him to repass into Sicily, he set out with

such precipitation, that I was not so much as thought of; whether he already numbered me with the dead, or that people of quality are troubled with short memories.

My nurse informed me of all this; and likewise assured me, it was she who had called the physician and apothecary, that I might not perish for want of assistance. This comfortable news threw me into a profound reverie. Adieu, my advantageous settlement in Sicily! my sanguine hopes, farewell! 'When any great misfortune happens to you,' says a certain pope, 'examine yourself well; and you will always perceive that it was, in some measure, owing to your own fault.' No disparagement to this holy father, I cannot see how I contributed to my own mischance on this occasion.

When I found the flattering chimeras with which I had stuffed my imagination vanished, the next thing that I concerned myself about was my portmanteau, which I ordered her to bring to my bed-side, that I might examine it. I sighed, when I perceived it open, crying, 'Ah, my dear portmanteau! my only consolation! you have been, I see, at the mercy of strangers.' 'No, no, Signior Gil Blas,' said the old woman; 'don't be uneasy; nothing is stolen from you; I have protected your box, as if it had been my own honour.'

I found in it the suit of clothes which I had when I came into the count's service, but I looked in vain for that which the Messenian had ordered to be made for me. My master had not thought proper to leave it with me, or else somebody had made free with it during my delirium. All my other baggage remained, and even a great leathern purse that contained my money

which I reckoned twice, as I could not, at first, believe that there were but fifty pistoles remaining of two hundred and sixty that were in it before I fell sick. 'What is the meaning of this, my good mother!' said I to the nurse; 'my finances are terribly diminished.' 'And yet nobody, except myself, hath touched them,' said the old woman; 'and I have been as frugal as possible: but sickness is very expensive; one is always laying out. Here,' added the good mother, taking a packet of paper out of her pocket; 'here is an account of the expense as just as the current coin, which will show that I have not employed a maravedi amiss.'

I glanced over the bill, which contained fifteen or twenty pages. Mercy upon me! what a quantity of poultry had been bought, while I was out of my senses. There was in broths only to the amount of twelve pistoles at least. The other articles were answerable to this. It cannot be imagined how much was laid out for wood, candles, water, and brooms. Nevertheless, swelled as this account was, the sum total did not exceed thirty pistoles, consequently there ought to be a remainder of one hundred and eighty. This I represented to her: but the beldame, with an air of devotion, began to take all the saints to witness, that there were but fourscore pistoles in the purse when the count's butler gave her the charge of my portmanteau. 'What is that you say, goody?' cried I with precipitation: 'was it the butler who put my things into your hands?' 'Without doubt it was he,' she replied; 'by this token, that when he gave me them, he said, "Good mother, when Signior Gil Blas is stiff, don't fail to treat him with a good funeral, for there is money

enough in the portmanteau to answer the expense."'

'Ah, damned Neapolitan!' cried I, 'I am no longer at a loss to know how my money is gone: you have swept it away, to make yourself some amends for the thefts I hindered you to commit.' After this apostrophe, I thanked heaven that the knave had not carried off the whole. Whatever reason I had, however, to accuse the butler of having robbed me, I could not help thinking that the nurse might, possibly, have done the deed. My suspicion fell sometimes on one, sometimes on the other; but it was still the same thing to me.

I said nothing to the old woman: I did not even cavil at the articles of her unconscionable bill; for I should have got nothing by wrangling, and every one must understand his trade: my resentment, therefore, was contented with paying and dismissing her three days after.

I believe, when she went from me, she advertised the apothecary that she had been dismissed, and that I was well enough to decamp without taking my leave of him; for, in a moment after, he came to me, quite out of breath, and presented his bill; in which, under names that were utterly unknown to me, although I had been a physician, he had set down all the pretended medicines with which he had furnished me while I was out of my senses. This bill might be justly said to have been written in the true spirit of an apothecary; and accordingly we disputed about the payment of it. I insisted on his abating one-half of the sum he demanded; he swore he would not abate one maravedi. Considering, however, that he had to do with a young man who might give him the slip, by quitting Madrid that very day, he chose

rather to be contented with what I offered, that is, three times the value of his drugs, than to run the risk of losing the whole. I gave him the money with infinite regret, and he retired fully revenged for the small disgrace he had suffered on the day of the clyster.

The physician appeared almost at the same time; for those animals are always at the tail of one another. I paid him for his visits, which had been very numerous, and sent him away very well satisfied: but before he would leave me, in order to prove that he had earned his fees, he related all the mortal symptoms, which he had prevented, in my distemper; a task he performed in very learned terms, and with an agreeable air, though it was altogether above my comprehension. When I had despatched him, I thought I had got rid of all the ministers of the Fates; but I was mistaken; a surgeon whom I had never seen, entered my apartment, and having saluted me very respectfully, expressed great joy in seeing me out of danger; a deliverance which, he said, he attributed to two copious bleedings that he had performed, and some cupping-glasses which he had the honour to apply. This was another feather to be plucked from my wing; I was feign to pay tribute to the surgeon also. After so many evacuations, my purse became so feeble, that it was little better than a lifeless corpse, so little of the radical moisture remained.

I began to lose courage, when I saw myself relapsing into a state of misery. I had, while I served my last masters, conceived too great affection for the conveniences of life, and could no longer, as formerly, look upon indigence with the eye of a Cynic philosopher. I will own,

however, that I was very much in the wrong, to let myself fall a prey to melancholy. After having so often experienced that Fortune no sooner overthrew me than she raised me up again, I ought to have regarded the troublesome situation in which I was, as another introduction to prosperity.

END OF BOOK VII.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas contracts a good acquaintance, and obtains a post that consoles him for Count Galiano's ingratitude. The history of Don Valerio de Lema.

Mr not having heard of Nunnez all this time surprised me so much, that I concluded he must be in the country; and, as soon as I could walk, I went to his lodgings, where I understood he had actually gone to Andalusia, three weeks before, with the Duke de Medina Sidonia. One morning, at waking, Don Melchior de la Ronda came into my head; and remembering that I had promised to him, while I was at Grenada, to visit his nephew, if ever I should return to Madrid, I resolved to keep my promise that very day. Having got a direction to the house of Don Balthazar de Zuniga, I repaired thither, and asked for Signior Joseph Navarro, who soon appeared. When I saluted him, he received me politely, but coldly, although I had signified my name. I did not know how to reconcile this frozen reception with the character I had heard of this clerk of the kitchen; and was going away, with a resolution to save myself the trouble of a second visit, when, all of a sudden, assuming an open smiling air, he cried, with a good deal of emotion, 'Ah,

Signior Gil Blas de Santillane! pray pardon the reception I have given you. My memory had betrayed my inclination: I had forgot your name, and little thought you was the cavalier of whom mention is made in a letter which I received from Grenada about four months ago.

'How rejoiced am I to see you!' added he, throwing his arms about my neck, with transport; 'my uncle Melchior, whom I love and honour as a father, conjures me, if perchance I should have the honour of seeing you, to treat you in the same manner as if you was his son, and to employ, if there should be occasion, my own credit, and that of my friends, in your behalf. He has praised the qualities of your head and heart, in such terms as would have interested me in your favour, even if I had not been engaged thereto by his recommendation. I beg, therefore, that you will look upon me as a man to whom my uncle has imparted, by letter, all his sentiments with regard to you. I offer you my friendship, and I hope you will not refuse me yours.'

I answered with that gratitude which I owed to the polite behaviour of Joseph; and, like people of warmth and sincerity, we contracted an intimacy on the spot: and I did not scruple to disclose the situation of my affairs; which he no sooner heard, than he said, 'I undertake to procure a place for you; and, in the mean time, don't fail to come and dine with me every day. You will fare better here than at your eating-house.' The offer was too agreeable to a poor creature just come out of a fit of illness, who had been used to good living, to be rejected. I accepted the invitation, therefore, and recruited so well in that family, that in fifteen days I had the face of

a Barnardine monk. Melchior's nephew seemed to make up his pack rarely; but how could it be otherwise! He had three strings to his bow; was, at the same time, butler, steward, and clerk of the kitchen; besides, (our friendship apart) I believe the comptroller of the house and he had a very good understanding together.

I was perfectly recovered when my friend Joseph, seeing me come in one day to dine as usual, made up to me with a gay air, and said, 'Signior Gil Blas, I have a pretty good place in view for you. You must know that the Duke of Lerma, prime-minister of the Spanish crown, in order to devote himself entirely to affairs of state, entrusts two persons with his own concerns. Don Diego de Monteser has the care of gathering his rents; and his household expense is managed by Don Rodrigo de Calderona. These two men, in whom he can confide, exercise their employment with absolute authority, without the least dependence on one another. Don Diego usually keeps in his service two stewards to receive his cash; and, as I understood this morning that he had dismissed one of them, I have been to ask the place for you. Signior de Monteser, who knows me, and of whose friendship I may boast, has granted it without any difficulty, on my recommendation of your morals and capacity. We will go to his house this afternoon.'

We went thither accordingly. I was very graciously received, and installed in the employment of the steward who had been dismissed. His office consisted in visiting the farms, keeping them in repair, and receiving the rents: in a word, I was concerned in the country estate, and every month gave in my accounts to Don Diego, who

examined them with great attention. This was what I wished. Although my integrity had been so ill repaid by my last master, I was resolved to continue always in the same path.

One day, having got notice that a fire had happened in the castle of Lerma, and that more than half of it had been reduced to ashes, I went thither immediately, to take an account of the damage; and having informed myself exactly, upon the spot, of all the circumstances of the fire, I composed an ample relation of it, which Monteser showed to the Duke of Lerma. This minister, notwithstanding the affliction he was in to hear such bad news, was struck with the relation, and could not help asking who was the author: Don Diego not only satisfied him in that particular, but also spoke so much in my favour, that his excellency remembered me six months after, on the occasion of a story which I am going to recount, and without which, perhaps, I should never have been employed at court. Here it is.

At that time, there lived in the street of the Infantas, an old lady called Inesilla de Cantarilla, whose birth was not certainly known. Some said that she was the daughter of a lute-maker; and others, that her father was a commander of the order of St. Jago. Be that as it will, she was a prodigy. Nature had bestowed upon her the singular privilege of charming the male sex during the whole course of her life, which exceeded seventy-five years. She had been idolized by the noblemen of the old court, and saw herself adored by those of the new. Time, that spares not even beauty, had exerted itself upon her in vain; though he had withered it, he could not deprive her of the power to please: a noble air, an

enchanting wit, and graces that were peculiar to her, made her inspire the men with passion, even in her old age.

One of the Duke of Lerma's secretaries, called Don Valerio de Luna, a cavalier of five-and-twenty, saw Inesilla, and fell in love with her. He declared himself in the most passionate terms, and pursued his prey with all the fury that love and youth can inspire. The lady, who had her reasons for not complying with his wishes, did not know how to moderate his flame. One day, however, thinking she had found the means, she carried the young man into her closet, and pointing to a clock that stood upon the table, 'You see,' said she, 'what hour it is—on the same day and hour did I come into the world, seventy-five years ago; and do you really think it becomes one of my age to be engaged in love-intrigues? Recall your reason, my child; and stifle those sentiments which are so unsuitable both to you and me.' At this sensible advice, the cavalier, who no longer acknowledged the authority of reason, answered the lady with all the impetuosity of a man possessed by the most violent emotions, 'Cruel Inesilla! why have you recourse to such frivolous remonstrances? Do you imagine that they change you in my eyes? Don't flatter yourself with such a vain hope. While you are such as I behold you, or while my view is fascinated by the charm, I cannot cease to love you.' 'Well then,' said she, 'since you are so obstinate as to persist in the resolution of fatiguing me with your addresses, my house shall be no longer open to you. I forbid you to come near it, and desire to see you no more.'

You will, perhaps, believe, after this, that Don

Valerio, disconcerted at what he had heard, made an honourable retreat. On the contrary, he became still more importunate. Love produces the same effects in its votaries, as wine does in drunkards. The cavalier begged, sighed, and, making a sudden transition from entreaties to rage, attempted to enjoy by force, what he could not otherwise obtain. But the lady, resisting with courage, cried, with an air of indignation, 'Hold, rash wretch! I will soon bridle your impious ardour. Know that you are my son.' Don Valerio was confounded at these words, which suspended the violence of his passion. But, imagining that Inesilla spoke thus only to be rid of his solicitations, he answered, 'You have invented that fable to elude my desires.' 'No, no,' said she, interrupting him; 'I reveal a mystery, which I should always have concealed, had not you reduced me to the necessity of disclosing it. Six-and-twenty years ago, I was in love with Don Pedro de Luna, your father, who was then governor of Segovia; and you became the fruit of our mutual passion. He owned you for his son, gave you good education; and although he had not been without other children, your good qualities would have determined him to leave you a fortune. I, for my part, did not forsake you. As soon as you began to appear in the world, I allured you to my house, in order to inspire you with that polite behaviour which is so necessary to a gallant man, and which women only can bestow. I did more; I employed all my credit to introduce you into the prime-minister's service. In short, I have interested myself for you, as I ought to do for a son. After this declaration, take your own measures. If you can purify your

sentiments and look upon me only as a mother, I do not banish you from my sight, but will treat you with all the tenderness I have hitherto preserved; but if you are incapable of that effort, which both nature and reason demand, fly this moment, and deliver me from the horror of your presence.'

While Inesilla spoke in this manner, Don Valerio remained in a profound silence. He seemed to recall his virtue, and endeavour to vanquish himself; but he meditated another design, and prepared a quite different spectacle for his mother. Being unable to console himself for the unsurmountable obstacle that opposed his wishes, he basely yielded to his despair; he drew his sword, and plunged it in his own bosom; punishing himself like another Œdipus, with this difference, that the Theban plucked out his own eyes, out of grief for having committed the crime; whereas the Castilian stabbed himself, because he could not commit it.

The unhappy Don Valerio did not die immediately of the blow he had given himself; but had time to repent, and ask pardon of heaven for having taken away his own life. As he left, by his death, a vacancy in the post of secretary to the Duke of Lerma, that minister, who had not forgot my account of the fire, nor the good character he had heard of me, chose me to fill the place of this young gentleman.

CHAPTER II.

Gil Blas is presented to the Duke of Lerma, who receives him into the number of his secretaries; sets him to work, and is satisfied with his performances.

Monterer was the person who informed me of this agreeable news, and said, 'Friend Gil Blas, though I feel some regret in losing you, I love you too well not to be overjoyed at your succeeding Don Valerio. You will not fail to make a fine fortune, provided you follow two pieces of advice which I have to give you. The first is, to appear so much attached to his excellency, that he shall never doubt of your being entirely devoted to his will. And the second is, to make your court to Signior Don Rodrigo de Calderona; for that man moulds the mind of his master like wax. If you have the good fortune to acquire the good-will of that favourite secretary, you will go a great way in a very little time.'

'Signior,' said I to Don Diego, after having thanked him for his good advice, 'tell me, if you please, Don Rodrigo's character. I have often heard him spoke of, and represented bad enough; but I have not much confidence in the pictures which people draw of those who have posts at court; though sometimes, I believe, they do not judge amiss. Pray, tell me then, what do you think of Signior Calderona?' 'You ask me a very delicate question,' replied the overseer, with a satirical smile. 'I would tell any body but you, without hesitation, that he is a very honour-

able gentleman, of an unblemished character: but I will deal more frankly with you: for, besides that I believe you a young man of discretion, I think it my duty to talk openly to you of Don Rodrigo, since I have advised you to cultivate him with care; otherwise, I should only oblige you by halves.

'You must know then, that from a simple domestic of his excellency, when he was only Don Francis de Sandoval, this man has arrived, by degrees, at the post of his first secretary. There never was a prouder man; he looks upon himself as the Duke of Lerma's colleague; and, at bottom, he may be said to share with him the authority of prime-minister; since he bestows posts and governments on whom he pleases to oblige. This the public often murmurs at; but he gives himself no trouble about the matter: provided an affair yields him a handsome present, he bids defiance to censure. You will easily conceive, from what I have said,' added Don Diego, 'how you are to behave to such a haughty mortal.' 'O yes,' said I; 'leave that to me: it will be very unlucky, indeed, if I cannot gain his favour. When one knows the foible of a person whom he wishes to please, he must be no conjurer if he fails of success.' 'Well then,' replied Monteser, 'I will now present you to the Duke of Lerma.'

We went immediately to the house of that minister, whom we found giving audience in a great hall, where there was more company than at court. Here I saw commanders, and knights of Calatrava and St. Jago, soliciting for governments and vice-royalties; bishops, who, being sickly at their own dioceses, desired to be made archbishops, only for the change of air; and some

holy fathers, of the order of St. Dominick and St. Francis, who laid claim to the mitre with great humility. I likewise saw some half-pay officers, who acted the same part that Captain Chinchilla had formerly done; that is, spent all they had in dancing attendance for a pension. If the duke did not gratify all their desires, he at least received their petitions with great affability; and I perceived that he answered very politely to those who spoke to him.

We waited patiently until he had despatched all these supplicants; then Don Diego said to him, 'My lord, here is Gil Blas de Santillane, that young man whom your excellency has chosen to supply the place of Don Valerio.' At these words the duke, casting his eyes upon me, said, in a very obliging manner, that I had already merited it by the services I had done him. He afterwards carried me into his closet, to discourse with me in private, or rather to judge of my understanding by my conversation. He desired to know who I was, and the life I had hitherto led exacting of me a sincere narration of the whole. What a detail was this for me to give! there was no thinking of telling lies before a prime-minister of Spain. On the other hand, I had so many things to tell at the expense of my vanity, that I could not resolve on a general confession. How should I extricate myself from this embarrassment! I took the resolution of embellishing the truth in those parts where it would have offended in its nakedness; but he did not fail to discover it in spite of all my skill. 'Monsieur de Santillane,' said he, with a smile, when I had finished my story, 'I see you have been in your time a

little upon the picare.'* I answered with a blush, 'Your excellency ordered me to be sincere, and I have obeyed.' 'I am obliged to thee for it,' he replied: 'go, my child; thou hast come off very cheaply. I am astonished that thou wast not undone by ill example. There are many honest people who would have turned great rogues had fortune put them to the same trials.

'Friend Santillane,' continued the minister, 'forget thy past life, and remember that thou now belongest to the king, in whose service thou wilt be employed for the future. Follow me, and I will make thee acquainted with the nature of thy office.' He carried me into a little closet adjoining to his own, where I saw, upon shelves, twenty thick registers in folio. 'It is here,' said he, 'where thou must work. These registers compose a dictionary of all the noble families within the kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarch. Every book contains, in alphabetical order, the abridged history of every gentleman; in which are recounted the services which he and his ancestors have performed to the state, as well as to the affairs of honour in which they have been engaged. There is also mention made of their fortune, morals, and, in a word, of all their bad qualities; so that, when they come to solicit favours at court, I see with one glance of my eye, whether or not they deserve them. That I may have an exact information of all these things, I have pensionaries every where, who take care to get good intelligence, which they transmit to me in writing: but, as their memorials are often diffuse, and stuffed

* A Spanish word, signifying rogue.

with provincial modes of expression, they must be rendered more concise, and the diction polished; because his majesty sometimes orders these registers to be read to him. In this work, which requires a perspicuous style, I will employ thee this very moment.'

So saying, he took out of a port-folio full of papers, a memorial, which he put into my hand; and went out of the closet, leaving me at liberty to perform my *coup d'essai*. I read the piece, which seemed not only stuffed with barbarous terms, but even filled with indecent passion, though it had been composed by a monk in the town of Solsona. He there tore to pieces, without mercy, a good Catalonian family; and God knows if he spoke truth: it looked so much like a scandalous libel, that I at first made some scruple of working upon it, being afraid of making myself an accomplice in the calumny. Nevertheless, novice as I was at court, I went on, at the hazard of his reverence's soul; and placing all the iniquity, if there was any in the case, to his account, began to dishonour, in good Castilian phrases, two or three generations of honest men perhaps.

I had already finished four or five pages, when the duke, impatient to know how I performed, returned, and said, 'Santillane, show me what thou hast done; for I long to see it.' At the same time, throwing his eyes upon my work, he read the beginning with great attention; and seemed so well satisfied, that I was surprised at his commendations. 'Prepossessed as I was in thy favour,' said he, 'I confess thou hast surpassed my expectation: thou writest not only with all the clearness and distinction that I desired, but thy style is also spirited and easy; thou justifiest the

choice I have made of thy pen, and consolest me for the loss of thy predecessor.' He would not have confined my eulogium to this, had he not been interrupted by the arrival of his nephew, the Count de Lemos, whom his excellency embraced several times, and received in such a manner as gave me to understand that he loved him with a tender affection. They shut themselves up together, to talk in private of a family affair, which I shall have occasion to mention in the sequel, and with which the minister, at that time, seemed to be more engrossed than with the business of the king.

While they were engaged together, I heard the clock strike twelve; and as I knew that the secretaries and clerks quitted their offices at that hour, to go and dine somewhere, I left my performance, and went out, not with a view of going to Monteser's house, for he had already paid my appointments, and I had taken my leave of him, but to the most famous ordinary at the court-end of the town: a common eating-house would not now serve my turn. 'Remember that thou now belongest to the king.' These words, which the duke had pronounced, were seeds of ambition that every instant sprung up in my soul.

CHAPTER III.

He learns that his post is not altogether without mortifications. His uneasiness at this piece of news, which obliges him to alter his conduct.

I was at great pains, when I entered, to let the landlord know that I was secretary to the prime-minister; and, in that quality, I did not know what to order for my dinner: I was afraid of bespeaking something which might savour of parsimony, and therefore bade him dress what he himself should think proper. Accordingly, he regaled me in a sumptuous manner, and I was served with marks of respect, which gave me still more pleasure than the good cheer. When the bill was brought, I threw a pistole upon the table, leaving to the waiters one-fourth of it at least; for so much remained over and above the reckoning. After which I strutted away with such gestures as showed that I was mighty well pleased with my own person.

About twenty yards from hence, there was a large house, in which noblemen that were strangers commonly lodged. Here I hired an apartment consisting of five or six rooms handsomely furnished, as if I already enjoyed two or three thousand ducats a year; and even paid the first month per advance. Afterwards, returning to work, I spent the whole afternoon in continuing what I had begun in the morning. There were two more secretaries in a closet next to mine; but they only transcribed what the duke gave them to copy. With these I contracted an

acquaintance that very evening, when we went out together; and, in order to gain their friendship the sooner, carried them to my tavern, where I ordered for supper the best dishes in season, with the most delicate wines.

We sat down together, and began to converse with more gayety than wit; for, to do justice to my guests, I soon perceived that they did not owe to their genius the places which they possessed. They were connoisseurs, indeed, in the different kinds of hand-writing; but they had not the least tincture of university education.

To make amends for this, they understood their own little interests to admiration; and were not so much intoxicated with the honour of serving the prime-minister, but that they complained of their situation. 'We have,' said one of them, 'already exercised our employment five months at our own expense, without touching one farthing; and, which is worse, our appointments are not regulated, nor do we know upon what footing we are.' 'As for my part,' said the other, 'I would, with all my heart, put up with twenty stripes, instead of appointments, to be allowed the liberty of engaging myself elsewhere; for I dare not retire of my own accord, nor demand my dismission, after the secrets with which I have been intrusted; else I might chance to visit the towers of Segovia, or castle of Alicant.'

'How do you make shift to live then?' said I to them: 'I suppose you have fortunes of your own.' They answered, they had very little money; but, luckily for them, they lodged at the house of an honest widow, who gave them credit for their board, at the rate of one hundred pistoles a year from each. All this discourse, of which I did not

lose one word, dissipated in an instant the fumes of my pride: I concluded that no more consideration would be paid to me than to others; consequently, I had no cause to be so much charmed with my post, which was not quite so substantial as I had imagined; and that, in short, I could not be too frugal of my purse. These reflections cured me of my extravagance. I began to repent of having invited my fellow-secretaries; wished the repast at an end; and, when the bill was brought, disputed with the landlord on every article.

'My friends and I parted at midnight, because I did not press them to stay longer. They went home to their widow, and I to my superb apartment, which I now was mad with myself for having hired, and which I firmly resolved to leave at the month's end. It was to no purpose to me to lie down on a good bed: my anxiety banished all repose; and I passed the night in contriving means of being paid by his majesty for my work. I stuck, on this occasion, to Monteser's advice, and rose with a resolution of going to pay my respects to Don Rodrigo de Calderona. I was in a very proper disposition to appear before such a proud man, because I found I had occasion for his protection.

I repaired then to the secretary, whose lodging communicated with that of the Duke of Lerma, and even equalled it in magnificence: by the furniture, it would have been a difficult matter to distinguish the master from the man. I sent in my name, as the successor of Don Valerio; but, for all that, I waited in the anti-chamber upwards of an hour. 'Mr. New Secretary,' said I to myself at this juncture, 'have a little patience, if

you please: I find you must dance attendance yourself, before you make other people do so.' The chamber door being opened at length, I entered, and advanced towards Don Rodrigo, who, having just finished a billet-doux to his charming Sirena, was putting it into Pedrillo's hands. I had never appeared before the Archbishop of Grenada, the Count Galiana, nor even the prime-minister, so respectfully as I presented myself to the eyes of Signior de Calderona, whom I saluted with a bow to the very ground, begging his protection in such submissive terms, that I cannot remember them without a blush. My meanness would have turned to my prejudice in the opinion of a real gentleman; but he was pleased with my grovelling behaviour, and assured me, obligingly enough, that he would let slip no opportunity of doing me service.

I thanked him with great demonstrations of zeal for his favourable sentiments of me; and having vowed an eternal attachment to him, took my leave, for fear of incommoding him, and begged he would excuse me, if I had interrupted him in his important affairs. As soon as I had acted this mean part, I went to my office, where I finished the task which had been imposed. The duke, who did not fail to come thither in the morning, was no less pleased with the end than he had been with the beginning of my work, and said, 'This is extremely well: write as well as thou canst this abridged history in the register of Catalonia; after which thou shalt take another information out of the port-folio, and manage it in the same manner.' I had a pretty long conversation with his excellency, and was charmed with his sweetness and familiarity of behaviour. What a

difference was there between him and Calderona! They were two figures strongly contrasted.

I dined that day at an eating-house for a moderate expense; and resolved to go thither incognito every evening, until I should see the effect of my complaisance and servility. I had money sufficient to maintain me three months, during which I resolved to work at a venture; purposing, as the shortest follies are the least prejudicial, to abandon the court, and all its tinsel, if I should receive no salary before the expiration of that term. This, therefore, was my plan: I spared nothing, during two months, to please Calderona; but he took so little notice of my endeavours, that, despairing of success, I changed my conduct towards him, and exerted myself wholly in profiting by those moments of conversation which I had with the duke.

CHAPTER IV.

Gil Blas gains the favour of the Duke of Lerma, who intrusts him with a secret of great importance.

Although his grace, to use the expression, only just appeared before me, and vanished again, every day, I insensibly rendered myself so agreeable to his excellency, that he said to me one afternoon, 'Hark'e, Gil Blas; I like thy disposition and understanding, and have a regard for thee accordingly. Thou art a zealous, faithful young fellow, extremely intelligent and discreet;

so that I don't think I shall misplace my confidence, if I bestow it upon thee.' I threw myself on my knees, when I heard these words, and, after having respectfully kissed one of his hands, which he held out to raise me up, answered, 'Is it possible, then, that your excellency can deign to honour me with such extraordinary favour! What secret enemies will your goodness raise up against me! But there is only one man whose hatred I dread, and that is Don Rodrigo de Calderona.'

'Thou hast nothing to apprehend from that quarter,' replied the duke. 'I know Calderona; he has been attached to me from his infancy; and, I may venture to say, his sentiments are so conformable to mine, that he caresses those whom I love, and hates those who disoblige me; instead of dreading his aversion, thou mayest, on the contrary, depend upon his friendship.' By this, I could plainly perceive, that Signior Don Rodrigo was a cunning rogue, who had got possession of his excellency's soul; and that I could not be too cautious with him. 'To begin,' added the duke, 'with putting thee in possession of my confidence. I will disclose to thee a design which I have projected: for it is necessary that thou shouldst be informed of it, that thou mayest acquit thyself the better of the commissions in which I intend to employ thee. I have a long time beheld my authority, in general, respected, my decisions blindly followed, and commissions, employments, governments, vice-royalties, and benefices, disposed of according to my wish. I may be said to reign in Spain; and it is impossible to push my fortune farther; but I would secure it against the storms that begin to threaten me;

and, for that effect, want to have my nephew, the Count de Lemos, for my successor in the ministry.'

Here the duke, observing that I was extremely surprised at what I heard, said: 'I see your surprise, Santillane; you think it very strange that I should prefer my nephew to my own son the Duke d'Uzeda; but you must know that this last has too narrow a genius to fill my place: besides, I am his enemy: he has found the secret of being agreeable to the king, who wants to make him his favourite; and this is what I cannot bear. The favour of a sovereign is like the possession of a woman we adore; a piece of happiness, of which we are so jealous, that we cannot resolve to share it with a rival, however connected to us by the ties of blood and friendship.

'I now disclose to thee,' continued his grace, 'the very bottom of my soul. I have already attempted to ruin the Duke d'Uzeda with his majesty; and, as I could not succeed, I have changed my battery. I design that the Count de Lemos shall insinuate himself into the good graces of the Prince of Spain. Being gentleman of his bed-chamber, he has an opportunity of talking with him every moment; and, besides that he does not want wit, I know a sure method for him to succeed in that enterprise. By this stratagem, I will oppose my nephew to my son, and breed a division between the two cousins, which will oblige them both to court my support, the awe of which will keep them submissive to my will. This,' added he, 'is my scheme; and thy assistance will be very serviceable to me; for I will always send thee to the

Count de Lemos, and thou shalt report from him whatever he shall have occasion to impart.'

After this confidence, which I regarded as ready-money, I no longer felt any disquiet. 'At length,' said I to myself, 'I am under the spout; a shower of gold will certainly rain upon me; for it is impossible but that the confidant of a man, who, by way of excellence, is called the great pillar of the Spanish monarchy, should be in a very short time, loaded with wealth!' Full of such agreeable hope, I saw with indifference my poor purse giving up the ghost.

CHAPTER V.

Gil Blas is overwhelmed with joy, honour, and distress.

The minister's affection for me was soon perceived, for he affected to give marks of it in public, giving me the charge of his port-folio, which he used to carry in his own hand to council. This novelty, making people look upon me as a small favourite, excited the envy of several persons, and was the occasion of my receiving a great deal of court holy-water. My two neighbours, the secretaries, were not the last in complimenting me upon my approaching greatness; and they invited me to sup at their widow's, not so much in return for my treat, as with a view to engage me in their behalf for the future. I was welcomed every where; even the haughty Don Rodrigo changed his behaviour to me, and now

called me nothing but Signior de Santillane; though, before that, he only favoured me with *you*, always omitting the term *Signior*. He loaded me with civilities, especially when he thought our patron might observe him; but I assure you he had no fool to deal with; I answered all his kindness with equal politeness; and the more so, the more I hated him in my heart: an old courtier could not have excelled me in this particular.

I likewise accompanied my lord duke to court, whither he commonly went three times a day. In the morning he entered his majesty's bed-chamber as soon as he was awake; and, kneeling by the bed-side, discoursed of those things that were to be done in the day; having also dictated to his master what was to be said, he retired; and returning immediately after dinner, not to talk on state affairs, but to converse on entertaining subjects, and regale the king with all the merry adventures which happened in Madrid, and of which he was always very early informed. Last of all, he visited him, for the third time, in the evening, when he gave such an account as he thought proper of what he had done through the day, and in a careless manner asked his majesty's orders for to-morrow. While he was with the king, I remained in the anti-chamber, where I saw people devoted to the idol Favour, court my conversation, and think themselves happy if I entered into discourse with them. How, after this, could I help thinking myself a man of consequence! There are a great many at court who have the same opinion of themselves, upon a much more slender foundation.

One day, I had still more food for my vanity: the king to whom the duke had spoke very ad-

vantageously of my style, was very curious to see a specimen of it. Upon which his excellency made me take up the Catalonian register, and, carrying me into the presence, ordered me to read the first story which I had abridged. If I was at first disturbed by the presence of the prince, I was soon composed by that of the minister; and read my performance, which his majesty heard with pleasure. He expressed his satisfaction, and even recommended me to the minister's protection. This did not at all diminish the pride of my heart; and the conversation which I had, a few days after, with the Count de Lemos, quite filled my head with the ideas of ambition. I went to this nobleman from his uncle; and, finding him at the prince's court, presented to him a letter of credentials; in which the duke told him, that he might open himself to me, as to one who was perfectly well acquainted with their design, and chosen by him as their common messenger. The count having read this billet, conducted me into a room; and, having locked the door, spoke in this manner, 'Since you enjoy the confidence of the Duke of Lerma, I don't doubt that you deserve it, and I ought to make no difficulty in giving you mine also. You must know, then, that matters go on swimmingly. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me from all the noblemen who are personally attached to him, and who study to please him. I had this morning a private conversation with him, in which he seemed chagrined at seeing himself, through the king's avarice, unable to follow the dictates of his generous heart, or even to spend like a prince. On this occasion I did not fail to lament his situation; and, profiting by the oppor-

tunity, promised to bring a thousand pistoles to him at the levee to-morrow, as an earnest of greater sums, which I have undertaken to furnish him with in a very little time. He was charmed with my promise; and I am certain of captivating his favour, if I keep my word. Go, and tell these circumstances to my uncle, and return in the evening to inform me of his sentiments of the matter.'

I quitted the Count de Lemos immediately, and went back to the Duke of Lerma; who, on my report, sent to Calderona for a thousand pistoles, which he gave me to carry in the evening to the count. This I performed, saying to myself, 'Oho! I now see plainly what the infallible method is which the minister takes to succeed in his enterprise: upon my soul, he is in the right! and, to all appearance, these prodigalities will not ruin his fortune: I can easily guess from whose coffers these pistoles are taken; but, after all, it is but reasonable that the father should maintain the son.' The Count de Lemos, when we parted, said softly, 'Farewell, my confidant! the Prince of Spain is a little amorous: you and I must have a conference on that subject one of these days. I foresee that I shall have occasion for your dexterity very soon. I came home musing on these words, which were not at all ambiguous, and which filled me with joy. 'The devil!' said I; 'I am just on the eve of becoming Mercury to the heir of the kingdom.' I did not examine into the goodness or badness of the office; the quality of the gallant laid my virtue asleep. What glory was it for me to be made minister of pleasure to a great prince! 'Softly, Mr. Gil Blas,' some folks will say; 'the business was only to make

you deputy-minister.' I own it: but at bottom the honour of both these posts is equal: the difference lies in the profits only.

While I executed these noble commissions, advancing every day farther and farther in the good graces of the prime-minister, with such enchanting hopes, how happy should I have been, if ambition had secured me from the cravings of hunger! More than two months had elapsed since I had quitted my magnificent apartment, and hired a small chamber very frugally furnished. Although this gave me some pain, yet, as I came out early in the morning, and did not go home to bed before night, I bore my fortune patiently. The whole day I appeared upon my theatre, that is, in the duke's house, and played the part of a man of consequence; but, when I crept up into my garret, my importance vanished, and nothing remained but poor Gil Blas without money, and, which is worse, without any thing that could fetch it. Though I had not been too proud to discover my necessity to any body, I did not know one person that could assist me, except Navarro, whom I had neglected so much, since I turned courtier, that I had not assurance enough to make application to his friendship. I had been obliged to sell all my clothes piecemeal, except those for which I had absolute occasion. I went no more to the eating-house, because I had not wherewithal to pay my ordinary. How did I make shift then to subsist? Every morning, a little bread and wine was brought into our offices for breakfast: this was all that the minister allowed; this was all that I eat through the day; and I generally went supperless to bed.

Such was the situation of a man who shone at court, and who was more properly an object of compassion than envy. Nevertheless, I could no longer sustain the weight of my misery; and at length determined to disclose it, with address, to the Duke of Lerma, as soon as an opportunity should offer. Happily for me, I found an occasion at the Escurial,* whither the king and the prince repaired some days after I had come to this resolution.

CHAPTER VI.

The manner in which Gil Blas informs the Duke of Lerma of his necessity, and that minister's behaviour on the occasion.

While the king was at the Escurial, he defrayed the expense of every body; so that there

* Escurial, a royal palace of the King of Spain in New Castile, about twenty-two miles from Madrid. It was begun in 1537, by Philip II. son of the Emperor Charles V. after the victory which his army obtained over the French at St. Quintin, and finished in twenty-two years, at an immense expense. It stands in a dry barren country, almost surrounded with mountains, but wants nothing to render it a complete town, having fifteen thousand windows, twenty-two courts, and seventeen cloisters, or piazzas, besides a church, college, monastery, dwelling-houses, shops, artificers, &c. It has forty chapels: the high altar in one of which, from the ground to the roof, consists of the most beautiful jasper. This chapel is said to have cost upwards of five millions. The pantheon, where the royal family of Spain are interred, is in the above-mentioned chapel, and is a very curious and rich structure; it was begun by Charles V. carried on by Kings Philip II. and III. and completed by Philip IV. From the Escurial is an elegant prospect of Madrid.

I did not feel where the shoe pinched: I lay in a wardrobe, just by the bed-chamber of the duke; who one morning, rising as usual at break of day, made me take some papers and a standish, and follow him into the palace garden. We went and sat down under a tuft of trees, where I put myself, by his order, in the posture of a man writing on the crown of his hat; while he held in his hand a paper, which he pretended to read: so that, at a distance, we seemed busy in very serious affairs, though all the while we talked of nothing but trifles.

For the space of an hour, I had diverted his excellency with all the sallies that my good humour could afford, when two magpies, perching on the trees under which we sat, began to chatter in such a noisy manner, as attracted our attention. 'These birds,' said the duke, 'seem to scold one another; I should be very glad to know the cause of their quarrel.' 'My lord,' said I, 'your curiosity puts me in mind of an Indian fable, which I have read in Pilpay, or some other author of that kind.' The minister desired to hear it, and I recounted it in these words—

'Heretofore a good monarch reigned in Persia, whose genius being not quite extensive enough to govern his kingdom of himself, he left that care to his Grand Vizir Atalmuc; a man of superior capacity, who supported the weight of that vast monarchy without stooping, and maintained it in profound peace. He had even the art of making the royal authority loved, as well as feared; and the subjects enjoyed an affectionate father in a vizir who was faithful to his prince. Atalmuc had, amongst his secretaries, a young Cachemirian called Zeangir, whom he

loved more than all the others. He took pleasure in his conversation, carried him in his company to the chase, and even disclosed to him his most secret thoughts. One day, while they hunted together in a wood, the vizir seeing two ravens croaking on a tree, said to his secretary, "I wish I knew what these birds are talking of in their language." "Signior," answered the Cachemirian, "your wish may be accomplished." "How can that be?" replied Atalmuc. "A cabalistical dervise," said Zeangir, "taught me the language of birds. If you please, I will listen to these, and repeat to you verbatim every thing that I shall hear." The vizir consented; and the Cachemirian approaching the ravens, seemed to lend an attentive ear to their discourse: after which, returning to his master, "Signior," said he, "would you believe it? we are the subject of their conversation." "Impossible!" cried the Persian minister; "what can they say of us?" "One of them," replied the secretary, "said— "Behold the Grand Vizir Atalmuc in person, that tutelary eagle, who covers Persia like a nest with his wings, and incessantly watches for its preservation. As a relaxation from his painful toils, he hunts in this wood with his faithful Zeangir. How happy is that secretary in serving a master who has so much affection for him!" "Softly," said the other raven, "softly! don't too much extol the happines of that Cachemirian: Atalmuc, it is true, converses familiarly with him, honours him with his confidence, and, I doubt not, intends to give him a considerable post: but, before that happens, Zeangir will die of hunger. That poor devil lodges in a small paltry room, where he is in want of the common necessaries

of life. In a word, he lives in a miserable manner, though nobody at court perceives it. The grand vizir never thinks of inquiring into his circumstances; but, content with entertaining favourable sentiments in his behalf, leaves him, in the mean time, a prey to poverty."

Here I left off speaking, in order to observe the duke; who asked with a smile, what impression the apologue made on the mind of Atalmuc, and if the grand vizir was not offended at the presumption of his secretary. 'No, my lord,' said I, in great confusion at his question, 'the fable says, that, on the contrary, he loaded him with favours.' 'That was lucky,' replied the duke, with a serious air; 'some ministers would not like to be so schooled. But,' added he, breaking off the discourse, and getting up, 'I believe the king will soon be awake, and my duty obliges me to be near him.' So saying, he walked hastily towards the palace, without speaking another word, and very ill-pleased, as I imagined, with the Indian fable.

I followed him to the very door of his majesty's bed-chamber; after which, I went and put the papers into the place from whence I had taken them, and then entered the closet, where our two copying secretaries were at work; for they were also along with the court. 'What is the matter with you, Signior de Santillane?' said they, when they saw me; 'you seem very much disturbed! Has any disagreeable accident happened to you?'

I was too much affected with the bad success of my apologue to conceal my grief: I recounted to them what I had said to the duke; and they expressed their sympathy in the sharp affliction

with which I was seized. 'You have great reason to be grieved,' said one of them; 'I wish you may be better treated than the secretary of Cardinal Spinola; who, tired of having received nothing during fifteen months, in which he was employed by his eminence, took the liberty, one day, of representing his necessity, and craving some money for his subsistence. "It is just," said the minister, "that you should be paid. Here," added he, giving him an order for a thousand ducats; "go and receive that sum from the royal treasury; but remember at the same time, that I have no farther occasion for your service." The secretary would have consoled himself for his dismission, had he touched his thousand ducats, and been allowed to seek for business elsewhere; but, just as he went out of the cardinal's house, he was arrested by an alguazil, and conducted to the tower of Segovia, where he has been prisoner a long time.'

This touch of history redoubled my fear; I believed myself undone; and, becoming inconsolable, began to reproach my own impatience, as if I had not suffered enough. 'Alas!' said I, 'why did I risk that unlucky fable which has displeased the minister? perhaps he was just on the point of extricating me out of my miserable situation; nay, perhaps I was on the eve of making one of those sudden fortunes which astonish mankind. What riches! what honours have I lost by my own folly! I ought to have considered that great men don't choose to be anticipated, but desire that the least gratifications they are obliged to give should be received as their own free grace and favour. It would have been better for me to continue my slender regimen, without com-

plaining to the duke, and even to let myself die of hunger, by which means the blame would have laid on his side.'

If I had even preserved some sparks of hope, my master, whom I saw in the afternoon, would have banished them entirely; he was very serious with me, contrary to custom, and scarce spoke at all; a circumstance that threw me into mortal disquiet for the rest of the day: neither did I pass the night in more tranquillity; my sorrow for seeing all my agreeable illusions vanish, and the dread of increasing the number of state-prisoners, made me groan and lament my condition till morning.

The next day was the crisis of my fate. The duke ordered me to be called in the morning, and I entered his chamber, trembling like a criminal who is going to receive sentence. 'Santillane,' said he, showing a paper which he held in his hand, 'take this order.' I quaked at the word *order*, saying to myself, 'O heaven! behold Cardinal Spinola! the carriage is ready for Segovia!' The terror which seized me was such, that I interrupted the minister, and throwing myself at his feet, 'My lord,' said I, all in tears, 'I most humbly beg that your excellency will pardon my presumption: it was necessity alone that compelled me to disclose my situation!'

The duke could not help laughing at my disorder, and answered, 'Be comforted, Gil Blas, and listen to what I am going to say: although the discovering thy necessities was a reproach to me for not having prevented them, I am not at all disobliged, my friend; I am rather angry with myself for having omitted to ask how thou livest. But, to begin with making amends for this ine-

tention, I give thee this order for fifteen hundred ducats, which will be paid, upon sight, out of the royal treasury. This is not all: I promise thee the same sum annually: and besides, when people of wealth and generosity solicit thy interest, I do not forbid thee to speak in their behalf.'

In the ecstasy occasioned by these words, I kissed the feet of the minister, who having commanded me to rise, continued to discourse with me in a familiar manner. I attempted to recall my good humour, but I could not make such a sudden transition from grief to joy. I was as much confounded as a wretch who is informed of his pardon, in the very minute when he expected his execution. My master ascribed all this agitation to the fear of having incurred his displeasure, though the dread of perpetual imprisonment had no less a share in my discomposure. He confessed, that he had affected coolness towards me, to see whether or not I should be afflicted at the change; that from this he was convinced of my sincere attachment to his person, for which he loved me the more.

CHAPTER VII.

The good use to which he put his fifteen hundred ducats; the first affair in which he intermeddled, and the profit from thence accruing.

The king, as if he had intended to gratify my impatience, returned the very next day to Ma-

drid; upon which I flew instantly to the royal treasury, where I immediately touched the sum contained in my order. I now listened to nothing but my vanity and ambition: I abandoned my miserable room to those secretaries who are still ignorant of the language of birds, and once more hired my fine apartment, which was luckily untenanted. I sent for a famous tailor, who worked for almost all the beaux; he took my measure, and carried me to a shop where he took off five ells of cloth, which, he said, was barely sufficient to make a suit for me. Five ells for a suit in the Spanish taste! Just heaven! But let us spare our censure; tailors of reputation always use more than others. I then bought some linen, which I wanted very much, silk stockings, and a beaver laced with *point d'Espagne*. This being done, I thought it would not look well for me to be without a lackey, and desired Vincent Forero, my landlord, to accommodate me with one of his own recommendation. Most of the strangers who lodged with him used, on their arrival at Madrid, to take Spanish valets into their service, by which means his house was the rendezvous of all the lackeys out of place. The first that presented himself was a young fellow of such a soft, devout appearance, that I would have nothing to do with him: he looked too much like Ambrose de Lamela. 'I don't want,' said I to Forero, 'a valet of such religious deportment; I have been already bit by such another.' Scarce had I dismissed this lackey, when another came in of a very sprightly appearance, as impudent as a court page, with something roguish in his looks. Pleased with his outside, I put some questions to him, which he answered with spirit

I observed that he was of an intriguing disposition, and looking upon him as a subject pat for my purpose, engaged him immediately. I had no cause to repent of my choice; nay, I perceived, in a very little time, that I had made an admirable acquisition. As the duke had permitted me to speak to him in favour of people whom I wanted to serve, (and I was resolved not to neglect this permission) I had occasion for a jackall to discover the game; that is, an industrious pleasant fellow, proper to find out and allure those who had favours to ask of the prime-minister. This office was quite the master-piece of Scipio, (such was my lackey's name) who had been in the service of Donna Anna de Guevara, nurse to the Prince of Spain, where he had exercised that talent to some purpose.

As soon as he understood my credit, and that I should be glad to use it to the best advantage, he went to work, and that very day said to me, 'Signior, I have made a pretty good discovery; a young gentleman of Grenada, called Don Roger de Rada, is come to Madrid on an affair of honour, which obliges him to solicit the Duke of Lerma's protection, and he is willing to pay well for the favour he shall obtain; I have already spoke with him, and found him desirous of applying to Don Rodrigo de Calderona, whose power he had heard greatly extolled; but I have changed his intention, by assuring him that Calderona sells his good offices at an extravagant rate; whereas you content yourself with a moderate gratification for yours, and that you would even employ them gratis, were you in a situation that permitted you to follow your generous and disinterested inclination: in short, I spoke to him in such a manner,

as that you will see the gentleman at your levee to-morrow morning.' 'How!' said I, 'Mr. Scipio, you have already done a great deal of work. I perceive that you are no novice in matters of intrigue; and am surprised that you have not made your fortune.' 'That ought not to surprise you,' he replied; 'I love to make money circulate, and never hoard up what I get.'

Don Roger de Rada actually came to my lodgings, and I received him with politeness mixed with pride. 'Signior Cavalier,' said I, 'before I engage to serve you, I must know the affair of honour that brings you to court; for it may be of such a nature, that I dare not speak to the prime-minister in your behalf: make, therefore, if you please, a faithful report of it, and be assured that I will enter warmly into your interests, provided a man of honour may espouse them.' 'With all my heart,' replied the young Grenadine; 'I will sincerely recount my story.' At the same time he related it as follows.

CHAPTER VIII.

The history of Don Roger de Rada.

'Don Anastasio de Rada, a Grenadine gentleman, lived happily in the town of Antequera, with Donna Estephania his wife, who, together with unblemished virtue, possessed a gentle disposition and a great share of beauty. If she had a tender affection for her husband, he was also distractedly fond of her, and being naturally addicted to jealousy, (though he had not the least cause

to suspect her fidelity) was not without disquiet. He was afraid that some secret enemy of his repose made attempts upon his honour; he distrusted all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordales, who had free access to his house, in quality of Estephania's cousin, and who, indeed, was the only man he ought to have suspected.

'Don Huberto actually fell in love with his kinswoman, and had presumption enough to declare his passion, without regard to ties of blood, or the particular friendship subsisting between him and Anastasio. The lady being a woman of discretion, instead of making a discovery which might have been attended with melancholy consequences, reprimanded her relation with gentleness, represented to him how much he was to blame, in attempting to seduce her, and dishonour her husband; and told him very seriously, that he must not flatter himself with the hope of success.

'This moderation served only to inflame the cavalier the more; and imagining that he must push things to extremity with a woman of her character, he began to behave very disrespectfully to her, and one day had the audacity to press her to satisfy his desire. She repulsed him with an air of severity, and threatened to make Don Anastasio punish his rashness. The gallant, terrified at this menace, promised to speak no more of his passion; and, on the faith of that promise, Estephania pardoned what was past.

'Don Huberto, who was naturally a very wicked man, could not behold his love so ill repaid, without conceiving a base design of being revenged. He knew the jealous temper of Anastasio to be susceptible of any impression which

he had a mind to give: and he needed no more than this intelligence to form the blackest design that ever entered into the heart of a villain. One evening, while he and this weak husband were talking together by themselves, he said to him, with a melancholy air, "My dear friend, I can no longer live without revealing to you a secret, which I would have kept for ever from your knowledge, were not your honour dearer to you than your repose; but your delicacy and mine in point of injuries permits me not to conceal what passes at your house; prepare to hear a piece of news, which will give you as much sorrow as surprise; for I must touch you in the tenderest part."

"I understand you," said Don Anastasio, already discomposed; "your cousin is unfaithful." "I no longer own her for my cousin," replied Hordales, with an air of indignation: "I renounce her; for she is unworthy of such a husband." "It is too much to make me languish in this manner," cried Don Anastasio: "speak; what has Estephania done?" "She has betrayed you," answered Huberto: "you have a rival, whom she entertains in private; but I know not his name: for the adulterer, by the favour of a dark night, concealed his person from those who observed his retreat. All I know is, that you are deceived; that I am certain of. The concern which I ought to have in this affair but too well verifies my report. Since I declare myself against Estephania, I must be well convinced of her infidelity.

"It is in vain," added he, observing that his discourse had the desired effect, "it is in vain for me to tell you more. I perceive that you don't deserve the ingratitude with which your love is

repaid; and that you meditate just vengeance on the guilty. I will not oppose your design. Never examine who the victim is that you intend to strike; but show to the whole city, that there is nothing which you cannot sacrifice to your honour."

'The traitor thus animated a too credulous husband against an innocent wife, and painted, in such lively colours, the infamy with which he would be covered, if he should leave the injury unpunished, that he grew mad with revenge. Don Anastasio, having lost his judgment, seemed actuated by the furies, and went home with a resolution to stab his unhappy wife, who was just going to bed when he came in. He constrained himself at first, and waited until the servants were withdrawn; then, unrestricted by the fear of heaven's wrath, by the dishonour he was going to reflect upon his family, and even by the natural pity which he ought to have felt for an infant which his wife had already carried six months in her womb, he approached the victim, saying, in a furious tone, "Thou must die, wretch! thou hast but a moment to live, and that my generosity allows thee, to spend in a prayer to heaven, to pardon the outrage thou hast committed against me; for I would not have thee lose thy soul, as thou hast lost thy honour." So saying, he unsheathed his poniard. His action and discourse terrified Estephania, who falling at his feet, and clasping her hands, said to him, in the utmost astonishment, "What is the matter, signior? what cause of discontent have I been so unhappy as to give you? why would you take away the life of your spouse? If you suspect her of infidelity, indeed you are mistaken!"

"No, no!" the jealous husband hastily replied; "I am but too well assured of your falsehood: those who informed me are credible persons. Don Huberto—" "Ah, Signior!" said she, interrupting him with precipitation, "you have reason to distrust Don Huberto. He is less your friend than you imagine; if he has said any thing to the prejudice of my virtue, do not believe him." "Peace, infamous woman!" answered Don Anastasio; "by endeavouring to prejudice me against Hordales, you justify, instead of dissipating, my suspicions. You endeavour to render that relation suspected, because he is informed of your misconduct: you want to invalidate his testimony; but that artifice is in vain, and redoubles my desire of punishing your guilt." "My dear husband!" resumed the innocent Estephania, weeping bitterly, "distrust your own blind rage: if you follow its emotions, you will commit an action for which it will not be in your power to atone, when once you are convinced of your injustice. In the name of God, quiet your transports! at least give yourself time to clear up your suspicions, and do justice to a wife who has no crime to reproach herself with."

'Any other than Anastasio would have been moved with these words, and still more with the affliction of her who pronounced them; but he, cruel man! far from being melted at her distress, once more bade the lady recommend herself quickly to God, and even lifted up his arm to strike. "Hold, barbarian!" cried she: "if thy love for me is entirely extinguished; if the marks of tenderness which I have lavished upon thee are effaced from thy remembrance; if my tears cannot divert thee from thy execrable design; at

least, have some regard to thy own blood. Arm not thy frantic hand against an innocent who has not yet seen the light: thou canst not be its executioner without offending heaven and earth. As for my part, I forgive thee my death; but, be assured, the blood of the babe will cry for vengeance upon such a horrible deed!"

'Howsoever determined Don Anastasio was to pay no attention to what Estephania might say, he could not help being moved by these dreadful images which her last words presented to his thought. Wherefore, as if he had been afraid that his emotion would betray his resentment, he hastened to take advantage of the fury that remained in his heart, and plunged his poniard into the right side of his wife, quitted his house immediately, and fled from Antequera.

'Meanwhile, the unfortunate lady was so stunned with the blow which she had received, that she lay some minutes on the floor, without any signs of life: afterwards, recovering her spirits, she uttered such plaints and lamentations as brought an old maid servant into the room. As soon as this good woman saw her mistress in such a piteous condition, she awaked the rest of the domestics, and even the neighbours, with her cries. The chamber was soon filled with people; surgeons were called; they examined the wound, and had good hopes of her recovery. They were not mistaken in their conjectures; for, in a little time, they cured Estephania, who was happily delivered, three months after this cruel adventure, of a son, (Signior Gil Blas) whom you now see. I am the fruit of that melancholy pregnancy.

'Although scandal seldom spares a woman's

virtue, it respected that of my mother; and this bloody scene was looked upon in town as the groundless transport of a jealous husband. My father, it is true, was known to be a violent man, very apt to take umbrage without cause. Hordales concluded, that his kinswoman suspected him of having disturbed the mind of Don Anastasio with false stories; and satisfied with being, at least, half revenged, left off visiting her. Not to tire you, sir, I will not enlarge upon the particulars of my education; but only observe that my mother's principal care was to have me taught to fence; and I accordingly learned that exercise, a long time, in the most celebrated schools of Grenada and Seville. She waited, with impatience, until I was old enough to measure my sword with that of Don Huberto, before she informed me of the cause she had to complain of him: then, I being in my eighteenth year, she imparted to me the whole story; not without shedding tears in abundance, and appearing affected with the most violent sorrow. What impression must a mother, in that condition, make on a son, who neither wanted courage nor sentiment! I went instantly and challenged Hordales to a private place, where, after a pretty obstinate combat, I run him through the body in three different places, and left him breathless on the spot.

'Don Huberto, finding himself mortally wounded, fixed his last looks upon me, and said, he received the death I had given him as a just punishment for the crime he had committed against the honour of my mother. He confessed, that he had resolved upon her destruction, to be revenged of her scorn; and expired, asking pardon of heaven, Don Anastasio, Estephania, and me.

I did not think proper to return, in order to inform my mother of what had happened; I left that to Fame; and passing the mountains, repaired to Malaga, where I embarked with the captain of a privateer, just ready to sail on a cruise. He thought I did not look like one who wanted courage, and gladly consented that I should join his volunteers.

'We soon found an opportunity of signalizing ourselves. Near the island of Albouran,* we met a corsair of Mellila, on her return to the coast of Africa, with a Spanish ship richly laden which she had taken off Carthagena.† We vigorously attacked the African, and made ourselves masters of both ships, in which we found fourscore Christians, whom they were carrying as slaves to Barbary. Then taking advantage of a favourable wind that sprung up for the coast of Grenada, we arrived, in a little time, at Punta de Helena.

'While we asked the slaves, whom we had delivered, the places of their nativity, I put that question to a man of good mien, who seemed to be about fifty years of age. He answered, with a sigh, that he was from Antequera. I felt a strong emotion at his reply, without knowing wherefore; and he perceiving it, was remarkably disturbed in his turn. "I am," said I, "your townsman: may I ask the name of your family?" "Alas!" he replied, "you renew my grief, by

* Albouran, a small island in the Mediterranean, on the coast of the kingdom of Fez. Mellila is a little city in the same part of Barbary.

† Carthagena, or New Carthage, an ancient city in the kingdom of Murcia, situated on the coast of the Mediterranean sea.

desiring me to gratify your curiosity. Eighteen years ago I quitted Antequera, where I cannot be remembered without horror: you yourself may, perhaps, have heard of me but too often: my name is Don Anastasio de Rada." "Just heaven!" cried I, "can I believe my senses? What! is this Don Anastasio, my own father, whom I see!" "What is that you say, young man?" cried he in his turn, looking at me with surprise; "is it possible that you are the unhappy infant which was in its mother's womb when I sacrificed her to my fury?" "Yes, my father," said I; "I am he whom the virtuous Estephania brought into the world, three months after that fatal night on which you left her weltering in her blood."

'Don Anastasio, before I had finished these words, fell upon my neck, clasped me in his arms, and, for a whole quarter of an hour, we did nothing but mingle our sighs and tears. After having yielded to those tender emotions that such a meeting could not fail to raise, my father lifted up his eyes, and thanked heaven for having preserved the life of Estephania. But a moment after, as if he had been afraid of giving thanks unseasonably, he asked in what manner the innocence of his wife had been proved? "Signior," said I, "nobody but you ever doubted it; her conduct was always irreproachable. I will disabuse you: you must know that you was imposed upon by Don Huberto." I then recounted the whole of that relation's perfidy, the vengeance I had taken, and the confession he made at his death. My father was not so much pleased with the recovery of his freedom, as with the news I told. In the excess of his joy he began

to embrace me again with tenderness and transport; and could not help expressing his satisfaction with regard to my conduct. "Come, my son," said he, "let us hasten to Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife whom I have so unworthily treated. Since you have made me acquainted with my own injustice, my heart is torn with remorse!"

I was too eager to bring together persons who were so dear to me, to retard the happy moment: I quitted the privateer; and, with my share of the prize we had taken, bought two mules at Adra, my father being unwilling to expose himself again to the dangers of the sea. He had leisure enough on the road to relate his adventures, which I heard with as greedy attention as that which the Prince of Ithaca paid to those of the king his father. In short, after having travelled several days, we gained the foot of a mountain, in the neighbourhood of Antequera, where we halted, and, resolving to go home privately, did not enter the town till midnight.

'I leave you to guess the surprise of my mother at the return of a husband whom she thought for ever lost: and the miraculous manner (if I may be allowed the expression) in which he was restored, became another cause for her astonishment. He asked pardon for his barbarity, with such genuine marks of repentance, that she could not help being affected with them; and, instead of regarding him as an assassin, looked upon him as a man whom heaven had subjected to her will; so sacred is the name of husband to a virtuous woman!

'Estephania had been so anxious on my account, that she was overjoyed at my return. But

her pleasure was not without alloy: the sister of Hordales had begun a criminal process against the murderer of her brother, and caused me to be searched for every where in such a manner, that my mother, knowing how insecure I was at home, suffered great uneasiness, which obliged me to set out that very night for court; where I come, Signior, to solicit my pardon, which I hope to obtain, since you design to speak to the prime-minister in my behalf, and to support me with your whole credit.'

The valiant son of Don Anastasio here finished his narration; upon which I said to him, with an air of importance, 'Enough, Signior Don Roger; the case seems pardonable: I undertake to communicate your affair to his excellency, and I will venture to promise you his protection. The Grenadine, upon this assurance, launched out into a world of thanks, which would have entered at one ear and gone out at the other, had he not assured me, that whatever service I should do him, would be close followed by his acknowledgment. As soon as he touched on that string, I put myself in motion, and that very day recounted his story to the duke; who, having permitted me to introduce the cavalier, said to him, 'Don Roger, I am informed of the affair that brought you to court: Santillane has told me every circumstance; make yourself easy; you have done nothing that is not excusable; and it is particularly to those gentlemen who revenge their injured honour that his majesty loves to show favour. For the sake of form, you must go to prison; but be assured, you shall not continue in it long. Your friend, Santillane, will take care of the rest, and soon procure your enlargement.'

Don Roger made a profound bow to the minister, on whose word he surrendered himself. His pardon, by my care, was expedited in a very little time; for, in less than ten days, I sent this new Telemachus home to his Ulysses and Penelope; whereas, had he been without a protector, he would not, perhaps, have been quit for a whole year's imprisonment. I touched no more than a hundred pistoles for my good offices; so that it was not a great catch. But I was not yet a Calderona, to despise small matters.

CHAPTER IX.

Gil Blas finds means to make a considerable fortune in a short time, and gives himself great airs accordingly.

This affair quickened my appetite; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio, for his right of brokerage, encouraged him to go upon the scent again. I have already extolled his talents in this way: he might have been justly entitled the Great Scipio. The second customer he brought was a printer, who, in despite of common sense had enriched himself with books of knight-errantry. This honest tradesman had pirated a work belonging to another printer, and his edition was seized. For three hundred ducats he obtained, through my means, a replevy, and escaped a large fine. Though the minister, properly speaking, had no business with this affair his excellency, at my request, was so good as t

interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands, on the following occasion. A Portuguese ship had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and afterwards retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two-thirds of the loading belonged to a merchant of Lisbon, who, having reclaimed it in vain, came to court in quest of a patron who had credit enough to cause restitution to be made. I interested myself in his behalf, and he got possession of his effects, in consideration of a present which he made me, of four hundred pistoles, for my protection.

Methinks, I hear the reader cry in this place, 'Bravo, Monsieur de Santillane, put hay into your boots; you are in a fine road; push your fortune!' Oh! that I will, I warrant you! I see, if I am not mistaken, my valet coming with a new prize which he has grappled. Right: it is Scipio—let us hear him. 'Signior,' said he, 'allow me to introduce this famous operator to you. He wants a patent to sell his medicines, exclusive of all others, during the space of ten years, in all the cities under the dominion of Spain; that is, all persons of his profession shall be prohibited from settling in the place or places where he resides; and he will pay, as an acknowledgment, two hundred pistoles to any person who will procure for him the said privilege.' I said to the mountebank, assuming the patron, 'Well, friend, your business shall be done.' Sure enough, in a very few days, I despatched him with patents, which entitled him to cheat the people exclusively, through all the kingdom of Spain.

Though my wealth increased, I had obtained of his excellency the four favours I had asked so

easily, that I never hesitated in requesting a fifth; which was the government of the city of Vera, on the confines of Grenada, for a knight of Calatrava,* who promised me a thousand pistoles for the place. The minister laughed to see me so hot on the game: 'Egad, Gil Blas,' said he, 'you go on at a rare rate: you must be furiously inclined to oblige your neighbours. Hark'e, I shall not stand upon trifles with you: but when you demand governments, and other considerable favours, you shall, if you please, be contented with one-half of the profit, and be accountable for the other to me. You can't imagine,' added he, 'what expense I am obliged to be at, or how many resources I must have to support the dignity of my post: for, notwithstanding the disinterested appearance I assume, I confess I am not imprudent enough to disorder my domestic affairs. Take your measures accordingly.'

My master, by this discourse, banishing all fear of being importunate, or rather encouraging me to return frequently to the charge, I became more greedy of riches than ever; and would have willingly advertised, that all those who wanted favours at court should apply to me. I went upon one course, Scipio upon another, in quest of people whom we might serve for money. My knight of Calatrava had his government of Vera, for his thousand pistoles; and I soon obtained another, at the same price, for a knight of St.

* A military order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the year 1158, during the reign of Sancho III. King of Castile. The habit of the order is a large white mantle, with a red cross on the left side, powdered with fleurs de luce.

Jago.* I was not contented with making governors only; I conferred orders of knighthood, and converted some good plebeians into bad gentlemen, by virtue of excellent letters patent. I was also willing that the clergy should feel my benevolence: I bestowed small benefices, canonships, and some ecclesiastical dignities. As for the bishopricks and archbishopricks, they were all in the gift of Don Rodrigo de Calderona, who likewise appointed magistrates, commanders, and viceroys. A plain proof that the great places were no better filled than the small ones; for the people we chose to occupy the posts of which we made such an honourable traffic, were not always the best qualified, or most regular. We knew very well, that the wits of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense; but we resembled those misers, who console themselves for the public scorn with a sight of their gold.

Isocrates had reason to call intemperance and folly the inseparable companions of wealth. When I found myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a condition to get, perhaps, ten times as much, I thought I must then make a figure worthy of the prime-minister's confidant. I hired a whole house, which I furnished in a handsome manner; bought the coach of a notary, who had set it up through ostentation, and now wanted to get rid of it by the advice of his baker. I engaged a coachman; and, as it was but just to advance old servants, raised Scipio to the triple

* St. Jago, or St. James. This is the highest order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the twelfth century. They bear for arms a sword gules, the handle is in form of a cross pow dered with fleurs de luce; and their motto is, *Sanguine Arabum*

honour of my valet de chambre, secretary, and steward: but what put the finishing stroke to my pride was, the minister's allowing my people to wear his livery. This banished all the judgment that remained; and I became as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro, who, when they had made themselves as pale as their master, by drinking decoctions of cumin, imagined themselves as learned; and well nigh believed myself the Duke of Lerma's relation. I really took it in my head, that I should pass for such, or, perhaps, for one of his bastards: a reflection that gave me infinite pleasure.

Add to this, that, in imitation of his excellency, who kept open table, I resolved to entertain also. For this purpose, I ordered Scipio to look out for a skilful cook; and he found one, who was, perhaps, comparable to that of Nomentanos,* of dainty memory. I furnished my cellar with delicious wines; and, after having laid in all other kinds of provision, began to receive company. Every evening, some of the principal clerks of the minister's office, who proudly assume the quality of secretaries of state, came to sup with me. I gave them good cheer, and always sent them home well watered. Scipio, on his side, (for it was like master like man) kept table also in the buttery, where he regaled his acquaintances at my expense: but, exclusive of my regard for that young fellow, I thought, as he contributed to my getting money, he had a right to assist me in spending it. Besides, I looked upon this profusion like a young man,

* An epicure, that lived in the Augustan age, and eat up a vast fortune.

and did not perceive the consequence. I had another reason also for overlooking it. Benefices and employments never ceased bringing grist to the mill: and seeing my finances daily increase, I thought I had for once drove a nail into the wheel of fortune.

There was nothing now wanting to gratify my vanity, but to make Fabricius an eye-witness of my pomp. I did not doubt that he was returned from Andalusia; and, that I might have the pleasure of surprising him, sent him an anonymous billet, importing, that a Sicilian nobleman of his acquaintance expected him to supper, at such a day, hour, and place. Nunnez came at the time appointed, and was amazed to find that I was the foreign nobleman who had invited him to supper. 'Yes, friend,' said I to him, 'this is my house; I have a handsome equipage, a good table, and a strong box besides.' 'Is it possible,' cried he, with great vivacity, 'that I find thee again in such opulence! how happy am I in having recommended thee to Count Galiano! I told thee that he was a generous nobleman, who would soon make thee easy for life. Thou hast, doubtless,' added he, 'followed the wise advice I gave thee, and given the butler a little more rein. I congratulate thee upon thy conduct; for it is by such prudent measures only that the stewards in great families become so rich.'

I let Fabricius applaud himself as much as he pleased for having introduced me to the service of Count Galiano; after which, in order to moderate the joy which he felt for having procured me such a good post, I related the marks of gratitude with which that nobleman had repaid my service; but, perceiving that my poet, while I

made the detail, sung his recantation within himself, I said to him, 'I forgive the Sicilian: between you and me, I have more cause to rejoice than be sorry at his behaviour towards me. If the count had not used me ill, I should have followed him to Sicily, where I should now have been a servant, in expectation of an uncertain establishment. In a word, I should not have been confidant to the Duke of Lerma.' Nunnez was so struck with these last words, that he continued some minutes incapable of uttering one syllable. Then breaking silence all of a sudden, 'Did I understand you aright?' said he: 'what! have you the confidence of the prime-minister?' 'I share it,' I replied, 'with Don Rodrigo de Calderona; and, in all appearance, I shall make great progress.' 'Truly, Signior de Santillane,' said he, 'I look upon you with admiration! you are capable of filling all sorts of employments. What talents you are master of! you have (to use the expression of our tennis-court) the universal tool; that is to say, you are qualified for every thing. Finally, Signior,' added he, 'I am overjoyed at your worship's prosperity.' 'O the devil!' said I, interrupting him; 'Mr. Nunnez, truce with signior and your worship: let us banish these terms and live familiarly together.' 'Thou art in the right,' he replied; 'I ought not to look upon thee otherwise than as usual, although thou art become rich. I will confess my weakness; I was dazzled when I understood thy happy fate: but that prejudice is over, and I now behold thee again as my old friend, Gil Blas.'

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. 'Gentlemen,' said I to them, presenting Nunnez, 'you shall sup with

Signior Don Fabricio, who composes verses worthy of King Numa,* and writes in prose like a prodigy.' Unluckily, I spoke to people who regarded poetry so little, that our author suffered on account of his profession. Scarce would they deign to favour him with a look. It was to no purpose that he said witty things, in order to attract their attention: they did not perceive the beauty of his sallies; and he was so much piqued at their want of taste, that he made use of his poetical license, and cunningly withdrawing from the company, disappeared. Our clerks did not perceive his retreat, and sat down to table without so much as asking what was become of him.

Just as I had done dressing, next morning, and was going abroad, the poet of Asturias entered my chamber, saying, 'I ask pardon, my friend, for having so abruptly left thy clerks last night; but truly, I was so much out of my element among them, that I could no longer endure my situation. A parcel of insolent fellows, with their self-sufficient starched airs! I can't comprehend how thou, who hast an acuteness of understanding, canst accommodate thyself to such stupid guests! This very day,' added he, 'I will bring hither fellows of wit and spirit.' 'I shall be obliged to thee,' answered I; 'and will entirely depend upon thy taste in the choice of them.' 'Thou art in the right,' said he; 'I promise thee superior geniuses, of the most entertaining characters. I will go this instant to a coffee-house where they meet, and bespeak them before they engage themselves elsewhere; for,

* The obscure verses sung by the Salian priests, in their processions, were composed by Numa.

happy is the man who can have their company at dinner or supper, so much are they admired for their agreeable humour.'

So saying, he left me, and at supper-time returned with six authors only, whom he introduced to me one after another, characterizing each as he presented him. To hear him, one would have thought that these wits surpassed those of ancient Greece and Italy; and their works, as he said, deserved to be engraven in letters of gold. I received these gentlemen very politely, and even affected to load them with civility; for the nation of authors is a little vainglorious. Though I had not laid my injunctions on Scipio to take care that our table should be sumptuously furnished, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat that day, he had reinforced our services of his own accord. In short, we went to supper in high glee: my poets began to talk of themselves, and were not silent in their own praise. One, with a lofty air, mentioned grandees and ladies of quality who were delighted with his muse; another, finding fault with the choice which a learned academy had made of two members, modestly observed that they ought to have chosen him. The discourse of the rest was not a tittle less arrogant. In the middle of supper they worried me with verse and prose; each, in his turn, repeating a specimen of his own writing: one regaled me with a sonnet; another rehearsed a scene of a tragedy; a third read a criticism upon a comedy; and a fourth, endeavouring in his turn to give us an ode of Anacreon translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who told him that he had used an improper term. The author of the translation

denied his assertion; and a dispute arose, in which all the wits espoused one side or other; the votes were equal, the disputants grew hot, and proceeded to invectives: the debate still continued; until, becoming quite furious, they got up, and went by the ears together. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, lackeys, and myself, had all sufficient work in parting them; which when we had accomplished, they went away, as if from a public house, without making the least apology for their unpolite behaviour.

Nunnez, upon whose promise I had formed an agreeable idea of this entertainment, remained very much out of countenance at this adventure. 'Well, friend,' said I to him, 'will you still extol your fellow guests? Upon my conscience, you have brought hither a villanous set! I will henceforth keep to my clerks: don't talk to me of authors.' 'I will bring no more such,' answered he; 'thou hast seen the best of the whole tribe.'

CHAPTER X.

The morals of Gil Blas are entirely corrupted at court. He is charged with a commission by the Count de Lemos, and engages in an intrigue with that nobleman.

As soon as I was known to be in favour with the Duke of Lerma, I had a court of my own. Every morning my anti-chamber was full of people, and I gave audience at my levee. Two

kinds of company came thither; one to buy my interest with the minister for favours; and the other to move me by supplications to obtain for them what they wanted, gratis. The first were sure of being heard and assisted; but, with regard to the last, I got rid of them immediately by evasive excuses, or amused them so long, that their patience forsook them. Before I belonged to court, I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but I no longer felt that humane weakness, and became as hard as flint: of consequence, I cured myself of my friendships also, and stripped myself of all social affection, as will appear by my behaviour to Joseph Navarro, in an affair I am going to relate.

This Navarro, to whom I owed so many obligations, and who, in one word, was the first cause of my fortune, came one day to my house; and, after having expressed a great deal of friendship for me, as he always did when we met, desired me to ask of the Duke of Lerma a certain employment for one of his friends; telling me, that the cavalier in whose behalf he solicited was a very amiable young gentleman of great merit, but that he wanted a post for his subsistence. 'I don't at all doubt,' added Joseph, 'that, kind and obliging as you are, you will be overjoyed at an opportunity of serving a man of honour in distress; and I am sure that you will think yourself beholden to me for giving you this occasion of exerting your generosity.' This was plainly telling me he expected it for nothing: and, though I did not much relish the proposal, I appeared very much disposed to do what he desired. 'I am charmed,' answered I to Navarro, 'that I have it in my power to show my lively

gratitude for all the favours which I have received at your hands. Your interesting yourself for any one is a sufficient inducement for me to serve him; your friend shall have that place you have pitched upon for him, depend upon it: the affair is now no longer yours, but mine.'

On this assurance, Joseph went away very well satisfied. Nevertheless, the person whom he recommended did not obtain the post in question. I procured it for another man, in consideration of a thousand ducats, which I put into my strong box, and which I preferred to any acknowledgment I might have expected from the clerk of the kitchen, to whom I said, with an air of mortification, when next we met, 'Ah, my dear Navarro! you was too late in speaking to me; I was prevented by Calderona, who has given away that same post; and I am quite in despair that I have no better news to entertain you with.'

Joseph implicitly believed what I said, and we parted more friends than ever; but I believe he soon discovered the truth, for he never after came to my house; and I was charmed at his absence. For, besides my being burdened by the services he had done me, I thought it did not look well for people of my rank at court to keep company with butlers.

I have not mentioned the Count de Lemos a good while. Let us now return to that nobleman, whom I sometimes visited. I had carried to him the thousand pistoles, as I formerly observed, and afterwards gave him a thousand more, by order of the duke his uncle, out of the money I had belonging to his excellency. The Count de Lemos had a long conversation with me that day. He told me that he had at last gained his end, and

entirely possessed the good graces of the Prince of Spain, whose sole confidant he was. He then gave me charge of a very honourable commission which he had already prepared for me. 'Friend Santillane,' said he, 'now is the time to be doing; spare nothing to discover some young beauty, who should be worthy to amuse that gallant prince. You don't want wit, and I need say no more; go, run, search, and when you have made a lucky discovery, come and impart it to me.' I promised to neglect nothing in acquitting myself handsomely of this employment, which must not be very difficult to exercise, since so many people lived by the same profession.

I had not been much used to these kinds of inquiry; but not doubting that Scipio was an adept in the art, I called for him when I came home, and said to him in private, 'Child, I am going to entrust thee with a great secret. Dost thou know, that in the midst of fortune's favours I find I want something?' 'I can easily guess what that is,' said he, interrupting me, before I could proceed; 'you want an agreeable nymph to unbend and exhilarate your spirits; and truly it is astonishing that you should be without one in the prime of your age, when grave gray-beards cannot dispense with such recreation.' 'I admire thy penetration,' answered I with a smile 'Yes; a mistress I want, and desire to have one of thy recommending. But I must warn thee beforehand, that I am very delicate in these matters I expect a lady of beauty and good morals. 'What you require,' replied Scipio, 'is not easily found; but, however, we live, thank God, in a city that affords some of all sorts, and I hope I shall soon be able to fit you to a hair.'

Sure enough, in three days he said, 'I have discovered a treasure; a young lady, whose name is Catalina, of a good family, and ravishing beauty; she lives under the tuition of her aunt, in a little house, where they subsist in an honourable manner on their fortune, which is but small; they are served by a chambermaid of my acquaintance, who has assured me, that though their door is shut to every body at present, it would be opened to a rich and liberal gallant, provided he were willing to avoid scandal, by going in at night without any show. Whereupon I described you as a cavalier who deserved to find the door unlatched; and desired the maid to propose you to the ladies. She has promised to do so, and inform me of their answer to-morrow morning, at a certain place.' 'That's well,' I replied; 'but I am afraid the chambermaid imposes upon thee.' 'No, no,' said he; 'I am not so easily persuaded; I have already interrogated the neighbours, and conclude from what they say, that Signiora Catalina is a Danæ, on whom you may descend, like another Jupiter, in a shower of gold.' Prejudiced as I was against intrigues of this kind, I engaged in it for once; and as the chambermaid came next day, and told Scipio, that, if I pleased, I might be introduced that very evening to her mistress, I stole thither between eleven and twelve. The maid received me in the dark, took me by the hand, and led me into a pretty handsome hall, where I found the ladies richly dressed, and seated on satin couches. As soon as they perceived me, they got up, and saluted me in such a noble manner, that I took them for persons of quality. The aunt (whose name was Signiora Mencia) though still agreeable, did not attract my atten-

tion, which was entirely engrossed by the niece, who seemed a goddess. To examine her minutely, however, she could not be called a perfect beauty; but she had such graces, together with a tempting luscious air, as hindered the eye to perceive her defects.

Accordingly, I was disturbed at sight of her. I forgot that I came thither to perform the office of procurer; spoke in my own favour, and expressed myself like a man inspired by the most violent passion. The young lady, in whom I found three times more wit than she really had, (so courteous did she seem) quite enchanted me by her answers; and I began to lose the government of myself, when her aunt, in order to moderate my transports, addressed me in this manner: 'Signior de Santillane, I must be free with you. On account of the character which I have heard of your worship, I have permitted you to visit me, without enhancing the price of the favour by standing on ceremony; but don't imagine yourself the nearer your point for that reason. I have hitherto brought up my niece in retirement, and you are (as I may say) the first cavalier to whose eyes she has been exposed. If you deem her worthy to be your wife, I shall be overjoyed at her good fortune. Consider, therefore, if she will suit you at that price; for you cannot have her at a cheaper rate.'

This well-aimed shot frighted away Cupid, who was just going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage so bluntly proposed, made me recollect myself. I became again all of a sudden the faithful agent of Count de Lemos, and, changing my tone, replied to Signiora Mencia, 'Madam, I am pleased with

your frankness, which I intend to imitate. Whatever figure I make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina, but have in view for her a much more splendid fate; in short, I design her for the Prince of Spain.' 'Your refusal of my niece,' replied the aunt coldly, 'was disobliging enough; there was no occasion to accompany it with a piece of raillery.' 'I don't railly, indeed, madam,' cried I; 'nothing is more serious; I have orders to find out a lady who deserves to be honoured with the private visits of the Prince of Spain: I find such a one in your house, and mark it for the scene accordingly.'

Signiora Mencia was astonished at these words, which I perceived did not much displease her: nevertheless, believing that she ought to affect reserve, she answered in this manner: 'If I was disposed to credit literally what you say, you must know that I am not such a character as to rejoice in the infamous honour of seeing my niece mistress to a prince. My virtue disapproves—' 'What a saint you are, with your virtue!' said I, interrupting her; 'you talk like one bred among silly citizens. Sure you joke in pretending to consider things in a moral point of view! that would be stripping them of all their beauty; they must be surveyed with a carnal eye. Behold the heir-apparent of Spain at the feet of the happy Catalina, adoring and loading her with presents; and remember, that from her perhaps will spring a hero who will render his mother's name immortal as his own.'

Although the aunt would have gladly embraced my proposal, she feigned herself irresolute about the matter; and Catalina, who wished the prince already in her chains, affected great indifference;

so that I was obliged to invest the place anew until at length, Signiora Mencia, seeing me repulsed, and ready to raise the siege, beat the chamade, and we agreed upon a capitulation, which contained the two following articles. Imprimis, If the Prince of Spain, on the report that I shall make of Catalina's charms, shall be inflamed, and determined to honour her with a nocturnal visit, I shall take care to apprize the ladies of the night that shall be chosen for that purpose. Item, The prince shall not visit the said ladies but as an ordinary gallant, with no other attendants than me and his Mercury in chief.

After this convention, the aunt and niece showed me all manner of friendship, and assumed a familiarity of behaviour, in consequence of which I ventured some hugs, which were not very ill received; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and loaded me with caresses. It is really wonderful to see with what facility an intimacy is contracted between the couriers of gallantry and the women who want their service. Had people observed me to leave this house with such marks of favour, they might have said, with some appearance of justice, that I was much happier than I actually found myself. The Count de Lemos was overjoyed when I let him know that I had made such a discovery as he desired. I spoke of Catalina in such a manner as made him long to see her. I carried him to her lodgings next night, and he owned that I had been very successful. He told the ladies, he did not at all doubt that the prince would be perfectly well satisfied with the mistress whom I had chosen for him, and that she on her part

would have cause to be contented with such a lover; that the young prince was full of generosity and sweetness of temper: in short, he assured them that he would bring him to their house in a few days, as they desired he should come, that is, without noise or attendance. This nobleman afterwards took his leave of them, and I withdrew in his company. We got back to his equipage, in which we had come thither, and which waited for us at the end of the street: he set me down at my own house, charging me to inform his uncle next day of this new-started adventure, and to desire he would send him a thousand pistoles to ensure its success.

I did not fail to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of what had passed, concealing only one circumstance. I did not speak a syllable of Scipio, but took to myself the honour of the discovery, according to the practice of those who live among the great.

By these means I acquired a great many compliments. 'Mr. Gil Blas,' said the minister to me with an air of raillery, 'I am ravished to find, that, with your other talents, you likewise possess that of discovering obliging beauties: when I have occasion for one of that class, you will give me leave to apply to you.' 'My lord,' I replied in the same tone, 'I thank your grace for intending me the preference; but give me leave to say, that I should be scrupulous in serving your excellency in that manner. Signior Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that employment, that it would be unjust in me to deprive him of it.' The duke smiled at my answer; then changing the discourse, asked, if his nephew did not want money for this adventure. 'Pardon me,'

said I; 'he begs you will send him a thousand pistoles.' 'Very well,' replied the minister; 'carry them to him, bid him spare nothing, but approve of whatever expense the prince shall propose.'

CHAPTER XI.

The private visit and presents which the Prince of Spain made to Catalina.

I WENT that instant with five hundred double pistoles to the Count de Lemos, who told me, 'You could not come in better season. I have spoke to the prince: he has bit at the hook, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace, in order to visit her. It is a thing determined, and our measures are taken accordingly. Inform the ladies of his resolution, and give them that money which you have brought; for it is right to let them see that he is no ordinary lover whom they are to receive; besides, the bounty of princes ought to precede their intrigues. As you will accompany him, together with me,' added he, 'be sure of being at his couchee this evening. Your coach also (for I think it is proper we should use it) must wait for us near the palace about midnight.'

I immediately repaired to the house, but did not see Catalina, who, they told me, was a-bed; so that I could only speak with Signiora Mencia,

to whom I said, 'Madam, pray excuse me for appearing in your house by day; but it is not in my power to do otherwise, for I must give you notice that the Prince of Spain will be here this night; and here,' added I, putting the bag of money in her hand, 'is an offering which he sends to the temple of Cytherea, to render the divinities of the place propitious. You see I have not engaged you in a bad affair.' 'I am very much obliged to you,' she replied; 'but tell me, Signior de Santillane, does the prince love music?' 'He loves it,' answered I, 'to distraction; nothing can entertain him so much as a fine voice, accompanied by a lute delicately touched.' 'So much the better!' cried she, in a transport of joy; 'you give me infinite pleasure in telling me this; for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays upon the lute to admiration: she likewise dances perfectly well.' 'Heavens!' cred I, in my turn; 'what perfections, my good aunt! so many are not necessary to make a girl's fortune: one of those talents is sufficient for the purpose.'

Having thus paved the way, I waited for the hour of the prince's couchee; then giving orders to my coachman, I rejoined the Count de Lemos, who told me, that the prince, in order to get rid of his company the sooner, would feign a slight indisposition, and even go to bed, the better to persuade them of his being sick; but that he would rise again in an hour, and, by a back-door, gain a private stair that led into the court-yard.

When he had informed me of what they had concerted together, he posted me in a place through which he assured me they would pass, and there I danced attendance so long, that I

began to think our gallant had taken another road, or lost his desire of seeing Catalina, as if princes usually dropped these sort of whims before they had satisfied them. In short, I imagined they had forgot me altogether, when two men accosted me, whom having discerned to be those I expected, I conducted them to my coach, in which they seated themselves, while I got upon the coach box to direct the driver, whom I ordered to stop about fifty yards from the house. I then handed the prince and his companion out of the coach, and we walked towards the place for which we were bound. The gate opened at our approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.

At first we found ourselves in the same darkness in which I had been introduced; though, by way of distinction, there was a small lamp fixed to the wall, the light of which was so dim, that we could only perceive it, without being lighted by its rays. All this served only to make the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was sensibly struck at the sight of the ladies, who received him in a hall, where the lustre of a great number of candles made amends for the darkness that reigned in the court. The aunt and niece were in a gay dishabille, so artfully disposed that nobody could look upon them with impunity. Our prince would have been very well satisfied with Signiora Mencia, if there had been no other for him to choose; but the charms of young Catalina, as they deserved, had the preference. 'Well, my prince,' said the Count de Lemos; 'was it possible for us to procure your highness the pleasure of seeing two ladies more handsome than these?' 'I am ravished with them both,'

replied the prince; 'and I shall never carry off my heart; for the aunt could not miss of it, if it was possible for the niece to fail.'

After this compliment, so agreeable to an aunt, he said a thousand fond things to Catalina, who answered with great wit and spirit. As those honourable people who perform the part that I acted on this occasion, are permitted to join in the conversation of lovers, provided it be with an intention of adding fuel to the fire, I told the gallant that his nymph sung and played upon the lute to admiration. He was overjoyed to hear that she was mistress of these talents, and entreated her to entertain him with a specimen. She complied with a good grace, took up a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sung in such an affecting manner, that the prince dropped down at her feet, in a transport of love and pleasure. But let us finish this picture; and only observe that, during this sweet intoxication, in which the heir of the Spanish monarchy was plunged, the hours stole away like minutes, and we were obliged to tear him from that dangerous house, because of the day's approach. We the gentlemen-undertakers carried him back to his apartment with great despatch, and then went to our different homes, as well satisfied with having fitted him with a she-adventurer, as if we had transacted his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I recounted this adventure to the Duke of Lerma, who desired to be informed of every particular; and just as I had finished my narration, the Count de Lemos came in, and said, 'The Prince of Spain is so much engrossed by Catalina, and has conceived such a passion for her, that he purposes to visit her often, and at-

tach himself to her alone. He wanted to send her this day jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles, but not having a penny in his purse, he applied to me. "My dear Lemos," said he, "you must find me that sum immediately. I know very well that I incommode, nay, exhaust you; but my heart retains the obligation, and if ever I find myself in a condition to exert my gratitude, otherwise than in thought, for all your friendship, you shall not repent having laid me under an obligation." "My prince," said I, leaving him that instant, "I have friends and credit, and will employ them both to accommodate you with what you want."

'It is not difficult to satisfy his demands,' said the duke to his nephew. Santillane, go fetch the money; or, if you please, he will purchase the jewels; for he is a perfect connoisseur in stones, especially *rubies!* Is not this true, Gil Blas?' added he, looking at me with a satirical smile. 'Your grace is very severe,' I replied; 'I see that you want to make Monsieur the Count merry at my expense.' This happened accordingly. The nephew asked what mystery there was in these words. 'Nothing,' answered the duke, laughing; 'only Santillane one day thought proper to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and afterwards found that he had gained neither honour nor profit by the bargain.'

I should have thought myself easily quit, if the minister had said no more of the matter; but he took the trouble to relate the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played upon me in the hired lodging, and to enlarge particularly on those circumstances which chagrined me most. His excellency, after having enjoyed his joke,

ordered me to accompany the Count de Lemos, who carried me to a jeweller's house, where we chose jewels, which we showed to the prince for his approbation; and which being afterwards intrusted to me, in order to be presented to Catalina, I went home for two thousand pistoles of the duke's money, with which I paid the merchant.

It is a question not to be asked, if I was kindly received next night by the ladies, when I exhibited the presents of my embassy, consisting of a handsome ring designed for the aunt, and a pair of ear-rings for the niece. Charmed with these marks of the prince's love and generosity, they began to prattle like two gossips, and thanked me for having procured for them such a valuable acquaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and some words escaped them, which made me suspect that I had introduced a mere gipsy to our great monarch's son; but that I might know precisely whether or not I had performed this fine master-piece, I went home, resolved to come to an explanation with Scipio.

CHAPTER XII.

Catalina's real character. The perplexity and uneasiness of Gil Blas. The precaution he was obliged to take for his own quiet.

Just as I entered my own house, I heard a great noise; and inquiring into the cause, was

told Scipio that evening treated half a dozen of his friends, who sung full throat, and frequently broke out in loud fits of laughter; so that assuredly this repast could not be properly styled the banquet of the Seven Wise Men.

The master of the feast, advertised of my arrival, said to the company, 'Gentlemen, 'tis only my master come home: be not disturbed, but continue your mirth; I will go and speak two words to him, and rejoin you in a twinkling.' So saying, he came to my apartment. 'What a bubbub is this?' said I, 'what sort of people are those you entertain below? are they poets?' 'No, indeed, sir, if you please,' he replied; 'it were pity to bestow your wine on such company. I make a better use of it. There is among my guests a very rich young fellow, who wants for his money an employment by your interest; and for him alone I give this entertainment: at every draught he drinks I raise the gratification you are to receive ten pistoles, and will make him drink till day.' 'If that be the case,' I replied, 'go back to thy friends, and don't spare the wine in my cellar.'

I did not think this a proper season to talk with him about Catalina; but next morning, when I got up, I spoke to him in this manner: 'Friend Scipio, thou knowest how we live together; I treat thee more like a comrade than a domestic; and of consequence thou wilt be to blame in deceiving me as a master. Let us then lay aside all reserve with one another. I will tell thee something that will surprise thee, and thou shalt disclose to me thy real sentiments of those two women with whom thou hast made me acquainted. Between thee and me, I suspect them to be two

artful passes, cunning in proportion to the simplicity which they affect. If my opinion does them justice, the Prince of Spain has no great cause to be well pleased with me; for I confess it was for him that I wanted a mistress. I accordingly carried him to Catalina's house, and he is become passionately fond of her.' 'Signior,' answered Scipio, 'I am too well used by you, to be wanting in sincerity with my master. I had yesterday a private conversation with the maid of these two princesses, and she related their history, which to me seemed very diverting. You shall hear it in two words.

'Catalina is daughter to a poor gentleman of Arragon; and finding herself, at the age of fifteen, an orphan, as handsome as poor, listened to an old commander, who conducted her to Toledo, where he died in six months, after having served as a parent rather than a husband to her. She secured his fortune, consisting of some moveables and three hundred pistoles in ready-money, then joined herself to Signiora Mencia, who was still in fashion, though already in the wane. These two good friends lived together, and began to behave so as to attract the notice of justice; at which the ladies being disgusted, hastily abandoned Toledo through vexation, and settled in Madrid, where they have lived about two years, without visiting any person in the neighbourhood. But the best circumstance of the story is this; they have hired two small houses, separated only by a wall, having in the cellar a stair of communication from the one to the other. Signiora Mencia lives with a young maid-servant in one of these houses, and the commander's widow possesses the other, with an old duenna, who passes

for her grandmother; so that our Arragonian is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes a pupil under the wings of her grandame. When she acts the niece, she is called Catalina; and when she plays the grandchild, her name is Sirena.'

At the name of Sirena, I grew pale; and interrupting Scipio, said, 'What do I hear? Alas! I am afraid that this cursed Arragonian is no other than the mistress of Calderona.' 'Truly,' he replied, 'it is the same; I thought this piece of news would have given you pleasure.' 'Thou art very much mistaken,' answered I; 'I have more cause to be sorry than rejoiced at it: dost thou not see the consequences?' 'No, in faith,' resumed Scipio; 'what mischief can it produce? you are not sure that Don Rodrigo will discover what passes; and if you are afraid of his getting information, you have nothing to do but prepossess the minister in your favour, by telling him candidly the whole affair. He will see your sincerity; and if, after this, Calderona should attempt to do you an ill office with his excellency, he will perceive that his whole design is to injure you out of a spirit of revenge.'

Scipio by this discourse banished my fear; and, resolving to follow his advice, I informed the Duke of Lerma of the discovery I had made. I even affected to tell it with a melancholy air, in order to persuade him of my being mortified for having innocently introduced Don Rodrigo's mistress to the prince. But the minister, far from pitying his favourite, laughed at the adventure, and bid me go on in my old way; saying, that after all, it was glorious for Calderona to love the same lady who had captivated the Prince of

Spain, and to be as well received by her as his highness. I imparted it also to the Count de Lemos, who assured me of his protection, in case the first secretary should discover the intrigue, and attempt to ruin me with his grace.

Imagining that, by this precaution, I had delivered the bark of my fortune from the dangerous shelves that environed it, my fear vanished. I still accompanied the prince to the house of Catalina, (alias, the fair Sirena) who was artful enough to invent stratagems to keep Don Rodrigo from her embraces, and to defraud him of those nights which she was obliged to bestow on his illustrious rival.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gil Blas continues to act the man of consequence. Hears news of his family, which makes but small impression upon him, and quarrels with Fabricius.

I HAVE already observed, that in the morning my anti-chamber was usually crowded with people who came to make proposals; but I would not receive them *viva voce*, and, according to the custom at court, or rather with a view of exhibiting my own importance, I said to each solicitor, 'Give in a memorial.' I was so much used to this, that one day I answered in these words to my landlord, who came to put me in mind of a year's rent being due. As for my butcher and baker, they saved me the trouble of asking their memo-

rials, which were always punctually delivered every month. Scipio, who imitated me so closely, that the copy might be said to come very near the original, behaved in the same manner to those who applied for his interest with me. I was guilty of another ridiculous piece of vanity, which I don't intend to excuse. I was foolish enough to talk of the grandees as if I had been a man in their sphere. If (for example) I had occasion to mention the Duke of Alva, or the Duke of Medina Sidonia, I called them, without ceremony, Alva, and Medina Sidonia. In a word, I became so vain and haughty, that I was no longer my father's son. Alas! poor duenna and usher, I did not so much as inquire whether you were happy or miserable in the Asturias! I did not even think of you! The court is like the river Lethe, in making us forget our parents and friends, when they are under misfortunes.

I no longer, therefore, remembered my family; when one morning a young man came to my house, and desiring to speak with me in private, I carried him into my closet, where, without offering him a chair, because he seemed to be a plebeian, I asked what he wanted with me. 'How! Signior Gil Blas!' said he, 'don't you remember me?' In vain did I consider him attentively: I was obliged to answer, that his features were entirely unknown. 'I am,' he replied, 'one of your old school-fellows, a native of Oviedo, and son of Bertrand Muscada the grocer, your uncle the canon's neighbour. I remember you very well; we have played together a thousand times at Ciega Gallina.'*

* Blind-man's buff.

'I have,' said I, 'but a confused idea of the amusements of my infancy; the business in which I have been engaged since that time, has effaced them from my memory.' 'I am come,' he resumed, 'to Madrid, to settle accounts with my father's correspondent; and I heard it said, that you was on a good footing at court, and already as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you on your good fortune; and will, at my return into the country, overwhelm your family with joy, by telling them such an agreeable piece of news.'

I could not, in common decency, forbear asking in what situation he had left my father, mother, and uncle; but this piece of duty I performed so coldly, that the grocer had no great reason to admire the force of blood. He seemed shocked at my indifference for those who ought to have been so dear to me; and being a plain vulgar young fellow, said bluntly, 'I thought you had more tenderness and sensibility for your relations. How coldly do you inquire into their circumstances! know, that your father and mother are still at service; and the good canon Gil Perez, burdened with old age and infirmities, draws near his end. People ought to have some natural affection; and since you are in a condition to assist your parents, I advise you, as a friend, to send two hundred pistoles yearly for their support; by which means you will make their life easy and happy, without any inconvenience to yourself.' Instead of being moved at the picture which he drew of my family, I was disgusted at the liberty which he took in advising me, without being desired so to do. With a little more address, perhaps, he might have persuaded me; but his freedom had a contrary effect. He perceived my

displeasure by my silence; and continuing his exhortation with more malice than charity, made me lose my patience entirely. 'Oh, this is too much!' cried I in a passion. 'Go, Mr. Muscada, and meddle with your own concerns; it becomes you well indeed to prescribe to me! I know my duty, on this occasion, better than you can teach me.' So saying, I pushed the grocer out of my closet, and sent him back to sell pepper and cloves at Oviedo. What he said, however, did not fail of having some effect: I reproached myself with being an unnatural son, and was melted accordingly. I recalled the care they had taken of my infancy and education; I considered the duty I owed to my parents; and my reflections were attended with some transports of acknowledgment, which, however, came to nothing: they were soon stifled by my ingratitude, and succeeded by profound oblivion. There are many parents who have children of the same stamp.

The avarice and ambition with which I was possessed, entirely changed my disposition. I lost all my gayety, became absent and thoughtful; in a word, a miserable animal. Fabricio, seeing me altogether bent on sacrificing to fortune, and very much detached from him, came but seldom to my house, where one day he could not help saying, 'Truly, Gil Blas, thou art growing out of my knowledge: before thy coming to court, thou wast always easy and tranquil; at present thou art incessantly agitated with project after project to enrich thyself; and the more wealth thou hast got, the more wouldst thou amass. Besides, let me tell thee, thou no longer treatest me with that effusion of the heart, and

freedom of behaviour, which are the soul of friendship; on the contrary, thou wrappest thyself up, and concealest from me thy secret views; nay, I can perceive constraint in all thy civilities towards me: in short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I formerly knew.'

'You joke, sure!' said I, with an air of indifference; 'I can't perceive any change in myself.' 'Thy own eyes are no judges,' answered he; 'they are bewitched: believe me, thy metamorphosis is but too true. Speak sincerely, my friend: Do thou and I live together as formerly? When I used to knock at thy door in the morning, thou camest in person to open it, very often half asleep; and I entered thy chamber without ceremony. Now, behold the difference: thou art attended by half a score of lackeys; I am obliged to wait in thy anti-chamber, and send in my name before I can speak with thee: then, how am I received! with a forced politeness, and air of importance; so that my visits seem tedious and tiresome. Dost thou think such a reception can be agreeable to one who has lived with thee, on the footing of a comrade? No, Santillane, no; I can't put up with it. Farewell! let us part friends, and get rid of one another: thou of one who censures thy behaviour, and I of a rich upstart who has forgot himself.'

I found myself more irritated than reclaimed by his reproaches, and let him go without making the least effort to detain him. In my opinion, at that time, the friendship of a poet was not of such value as that I should be afflicted at the loss of it: I found abundance of consolation in the acquaintance of some small officers of the king, to whom of late I was strictly connected by a simili-

tude of disposition. The greatest part of these new companions were people who sprung I knew not whence, and arrived at their posts merely by the happy influence of their stars. They had already made their fortunes; and the wretches, ascribing to their own merit the wealth which had been heaped upon them by the bounty of the king, forgot themselves as well as I did. We looked upon ourselves as very respectable personages. O fortune! how are thy favours usually dispensed! The Stoic Epictetus was certainly in the right, when he compared thee to a young lady of fashion who prostitutes herself to the embraces of footmen.

END OF BOOK VIII.

BOOK IX.

CHAPTER I.

Scipio advises Gil Blas to marry. Proposes the daughter of a rich and noted goldsmith for his wife: the steps which were taken in consequence of this advice.

One evening, after the company which had supped with me was gone, seeing myself alone with Scipio, I asked what he had done that day. 'A master-piece!' he replied: 'I intend to have you married to the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance.' 'The daughter of a goldsmith!' cried I, with an air of disdain; 'hast thou lost thy senses? how canst thou propose a wife from the city? One who has certainly merit, and is on a sure footing at court, ought to entertain more elegant views, methinks.' 'How, sir!' replied Scipio; 'sure you are not in earnest: consider that the male alone ennobles; and be not more delicate than a thousand noblemen, whose names I can mention. Do you know that the heiress in question is worth a hundred thousand ducats? Is not this a fine morsel of plate?' When I heard him talk of such a round sum, I became more tractable. 'I yield,' said I to my secretary; 'the dowry determines me: when shall I touch

it?' 'Softly, sir,' he replied; 'a little patience: I must first communicate the proposal to her father, and obtain his consent.' 'Good!' said I, laughing heartily; 'are you still thereabouts? I find the marriage is far advanced.' 'Further than you imagine,' answered he: 'I want only an hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and will answer for his consent. But before we proceed, let us come to a composition, if you please. Suppose I procure for you those hundred thousand ducats, how many will fall to my share?' 'Twenty thousand,' I replied. 'Heaven be praised!' said he; 'I limit the acknowledgment to ten thousand: for once, you are more generous than I. To-morrow I will set this negotiation on foot; and you may depend upon its success; otherwise I am but an ass.' In effect, two days after, he said, 'I have spoke to Signior Gabriel Salero the goldsmith, and have extolled your credit and your merit so much, that he listened to the proposal I made, of accepting you for a son-in-law; and you will have his daughter, with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it plainly appear that you are in favour with the minister.' 'If that be the case,' answered I to Scipio, 'I shall be married very soon: but, apropos, hast thou seen the girl? is she handsome?' 'Not so handsome as the dowry,' said he: 'between you and me, this rich heiress is not a very beautiful creature; but, luckily, that you don't mind.' 'No, faith, my child,' said I; 'we courtiers only marry for the sake of marrying, and look for beauty nowhere but in the wives of our friends. If it happens to centre in our own, we take so little notice of it, that it is but just in them to punish us for our neglect.'

'This is not all,' resumed Scipio; 'Signior Gabriel invites you to supper to-night; and we have agreed that you shall not talk of marriage. There will be several merchants of his acquaintance present at the entertainment, where you shall appear only as a simple guest; and to-morrow he will sup with you in the same manner. By this you may see that he wants to study your temper, before he proceeds; so that you must be upon your guard before him.' 'Zooks!' said I, with an air of confidence; 'let him examine me as narrowly as he pleases; I will lose nothing by his scrutiny.'

All this was punctually executed: I repaired to the house of the goldsmith, who received me as familiarly as if we had already visited one another several times. He was an honest citizen, polite *hasta porfiar*,* as the saying is. He introduced me to Signiora Eugenia his wife, and young Gabriela his daughter, to whom I paid abundance of compliments, without infringing the treaty. I said a great many nothings, in very specious words, according to the custom of courtiers.

Gabriela (no disparagement to my secretary) appeared not at all disagreeable; whether on account of her being richly dressed, or that I looked upon her through the dowry, I know not. What a fine house did Signior Gabriel possess! I believe there was more silver in it than in all the mines of Peru; that metal presented itself to the view, in all corners, under a thousand different shapes. Every room, and that in particular where we supped, was a perfect treasure. What a noble spectacle was this for the eyes of a son-

* Even to obstinacy.

in-law! The old man, that he might do the greater honour to his entertainment, had assembled five or six merchants, persons equally grave and tedious: they spoke of nothing but commerce; and their discourse might have been called a conference of factors, rather than the conversation of friends at supper.

Next night I treated my goldsmith in my turn; and as it was not in my power to dazzle him with plate, had recourse to an illusion of a different kind. I invited to supper those of my friends who made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be ambitious fellows, who set no bounds to their desires. These people talked of nothing but pomp, of splendid and lucrative posts to which they aspired; and this had its effect: the citizen Gabriel, confounded by their grand ideas, found himself, in spite of his wealth, a mean mortal in comparison of these gentlemen. As for my own part, affecting the man of moderation, I said I would be contented with a middling fortune; twenty thousand ducats a year, or so. Upon which, these greedy hunters of honour and riches cried, I was in the wrong: and that a man who (like me) was beloved by the prime-minister, ought not to restrict himself to such a trifle. The father-in-law lost not a syllable of what was said, and I thought I observed him very well satisfied when he retired.

Scipio did not fail to visit him next morning, and ask if he was pleased with my behaviour: 'I am charmed with it!' replied the citizen; 'the young man has won my heart. But Signior Scipio,' added he, 'I conjure you by our old acquaintance, to speak sincerely. We have all our different foibles, as you know; tell me that of

Signior Santillane: is he a gamester? is he a rake? What is his vicious inclination? Pray, don't conceal it.' 'You affront me, Signior Gabriel, by asking such a question,' replied the mediator: 'I am not so much in my master's interests as in yours. If he had any bad quality, capable of making your daughter unhappy, do you think I would have proposed him to you for a son-in-law? No, faith! I am too much your humble servant. But, between you and me, I know no other fault in him, but that of having no fault. He is too modest for a young man.' 'So much the better,' cried the goldsmith; 'I am glad of it. Go, friend; assure him that he shall have my daughter, whom I would bestow upon him, even if he was not beloved by the minister.'

My secretary had no sooner informed me of this conversation, than I hastened to Salero's house, to thank him for his condescension. He had already declared his pleasure to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand, by their behaviour towards me, that they submitted to his will without reluctance. I carried my father-in-law, and presented him to the Duke of Lerma, to whom I had imparted the affair the preceding evening. His excellency received him very courteously, and assured him that he was very glad he had chosen, for his son-in-law, a man for whom he had so much regard, and whom he intended to advance. He then enlarged upon my good qualities; and, in short, spoke so well of me, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in my worship one of the best matches in Spain. He was so overjoyed that the tear stood in his eye: he clasped me in his arms at parting, and said, 'My son, I am so impatient to see you

Gabriela's husband, that you shall be married in eight days at farthest.'

CHAPTER II.

Gil Blas, by accident, remembers Don Alphonso de Leyva, and does him a piece of service out of vanity.

The order of my history requires, that I should leave my marriage for a moment, to recount the service which I did to Don Alphonso, my old master, whom I had entirely forgotten till now that I remembered him on this occasion. The government of the city of Valencia became vacant; and when I heard this piece of news, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I reflected, that this employment would suit him admirably well; and, not so much through friendship as ostentation, resolved to ask it for him; representing to myself, that if I should obtain the place, it would do me infinite honour. Addressing myself therefore to the Duke of Lerma, I told him that I had been steward to Don Cæsar de Leyva and his son; and that having all the reason in the world to love them, I took the liberty to beg the government of Valencia for either one or the other. The minister answered, 'With all my heart, Gil Blas; I love to see thee grateful and generous. Besides, I esteem the family thou speakest of; the Leyva's have been always good servants to the king, and well deserve that place. Thou

mayest dispose of it at thy own pleasure; I give it thee for a nuptial present.'

Ravished with my success, I went, without loss of time, and desired Calderona to make out letters-patent for Don Alphonso. There I found a great number of people attending, in respectful silence, until Rodrigo should give them audience; and pressing through the crowd, I presented myself at the door of his closet, which was immediately opened, and displayed a multitude of knights, commanders, and other people of consequence, whom Calderona heard in their turns. His different behaviour to different people was very remarkable: he received some with a slight inclination of his head only; others he honoured with a bow, and conducted them to his closet-door. He put (to use the expression) different shades of consideration in the civilities he showed. On one hand, I perceived some cavaliers, who, shocked at the little regard he paid to them, cursed in their hearts the necessity that compelled them to cringe to such a fellow. On the contrary, I observed others, who laughed within themselves at his ridiculous and self-sufficient deportment. Though I made all these fine observations, I was not capable of profiting by them; for I behaved at home just in the same manner, and little minded whether my haughty carriage was blamed or approved, provided it commanded respect.

Don Rodrigo having, by chance, cast his eyes upon me, hastily quitted a gentleman to whom he was speaking, and coming up, embraced me with demonstrations of friendship that surprised me not a little. 'Ah, my dear colleague!' cried he, 'what affair procures me the pleasure of

seeing you here! Is there any thing in which I can serve you?' I told him the cause of my visit, and he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that what I wanted should be done by the same hour the next day. He did not limit his politeness to this, but conducted me as far as the door of his anti-chamber, whither he never used to go except with grandees, and there embraced me anew.

'What is the meaning of all this civility?' said I to myself, going out; 'what can it forebode? Sure Calderona meditates my ruin. Perhaps he is desirous of gaining my friendship; or, feeling his favour on the decline, cultivates me with a view of engaging my intercession with our patron in his behalf.' I did not know which of these conjectures I should adopt. Next day, when I returned, he treated me in the same manner, loading me with civility and caresses. True, indeed, he bated a great deal of that politeness in his reception of other people who came to speak with him. He was blunt with some, cold with others, and disobliging to every body: but all of them were sufficiently revenged by an adventure which happened, and which I ought not to pass over in silence. This will be an advice to the reader, for those clerks and secretaries who shall read it.

A man in a very plain dress, and who did not at all appear what he was, approached Calderona, and spoke to him of a certain memorial, which he said he had presented to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, who did not even look at the cavalier, said to him, in a surly tone, 'What is your name, friend?' 'I was called Francillo in my infancy,' replied the cavalier, very coolly; 'since

that time I have had the appellation of Don Francisco de Zuniga;* and, at present, my name is the Count de Pedroso.' Calderona, astonished at these words, and finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, endeavoured to excuse himself. 'Signior,' said he to the count, 'I beg pardon, if not knowing you—' 'I want none of thy excuses,' said Francillo, with disdain; 'I despise thy apologies as much as thy incivility. Know, that a minister's secretary ought to receive all sorts of people with good manners. Thou mayest, if thou wilt, be vain enough to look upon thyself as thy master's deputy; but don't forget that thou art only his valet.'

Though the haughty Don Rodrigo was very much mortified at this incident, he did not become a whit more affable. As for my part, I marked this stroke, and resolved to take care how I behaved to people in giving audience, and never to be insolent but with mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was expedited, I carried it away, and sent it by an express to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, in which his excellency informed him, that the king had named him to the government of Valencia.† I took no notice of the share I had in this nomination; I would not even write; pleasing

* Zuniga, one of the most ancient families of Castile.

† Valencia, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, on the River Turio. It is the see of an archbishop, and has an university. Trade and manufactures flourish here; the principal of the latter is that of silk, which the women and children spin before their houses. They export large quantities of wine, oil, and fruit; and the inhabitants have an easy and agreeable conversation, without any of that stiffness observable in the rest of Spain; and, on the whole, the place is so agreeable as to have obtained the name of *Valencia la hermosa;* Valencia the beautiful.

myself with the hope of telling him by word of mouth, and of surprising him agreeably, when he should come to court, to take the oaths for his employment.

CHAPTER III.

The preparations for the marriage of Gil Blas, and the great event that rendered them useless.

Let us return to my fair Gabriela, whom I was to marry in eight days. Both parties prepared for the ceremony; Salero took off rich clothes for the bride; and I hired a chambermaid, a page, and an old squire, for her attendants. All this was ordered by Scipio, who waited even more impatiently than I for the day on which the dowry was to be paid.

On the evening preceding that day so much desired, I supped at the house of my father-in-law, with uncles, aunts, male and female cousins, and played the part of a hypocritical son-in-law to great perfection. I showed great respect to the goldsmith and his wife, acted the passionate lover to Gabriela, and behaved very courteously to the whole family, to whose flat discourse and cit-like observations I patiently listened. Accordingly, at the price of my patience, I had the good fortune to please all the relations. There was not one among them who did not seem glad of my alliance.

The repast being ended, the company removed into a great hall, where we were regaled with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, which

was not ill executed, although they had not chosen the best hands in Madrid. Several gay airs, with which our ears were agreeably entertained, put us all in such good humour, that we began to form country-dances. God knows how we performed, since I was taken for a disciple of Terpsichore; though I had no other principles of that art than two or three lessons which I received from a coxcomb of a dancing-master, who came to teach the pages when I lived with the Marchioness of Chaves. After we had sufficiently diverted ourselves, it being time for each to think of retiring, I was very prodigal of my hugs and bows. 'Adieu, my son!' said Salero, embracing me; 'I will wait on you to-morrow morning with the dowry in good gold.' 'My dear father!' I replied, 'you shall be very welcome.' Then wishing the family good night, I got into the coach that waited for me at the gate, and drove homewards.

I was scarce two hundred paces from Signior Gabriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some a horseback, others a foot, armed with swords and carbines, surrounded the coach, and stopped it, crying, 'In the king's name!' They made me come out in a hurry, and threw me into a post-chaise, where the chief of these cavaliers mounting along with me, bid the driver proceed for Segovia. I soon guessed that my fellow-traveller was an honest alguazil, whom I questioned about the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered in the usual tone of those gentlemen, that is, in a brutal manner, that he was not obliged to tell me any thing of the matter. I observed, that perhaps he might be mistaken in his man. 'No, no,' said he, 'I know my bus-

ness better. You are Signior de Santillane; and you I have orders to conduct to the place for which we are bound.' Having nothing to reply, I resolved to hold my tongue. We travelled all the rest of the night, along Mancanarez, in profound silence, changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived in the evening at Segovia,* where I was locked up in the tower.

CHAPTER IV.

The treatment of Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and the manner in which he learned the cause of his imprisonment.

They began with putting me into a dungeon, where I was left upon straw, like a malefactor worthy of death. Here I passed the night, not in deploring my condition, for as yet I had not perceived the whole of my misfortune, but in tasking my remembrance to find out the cause of my imprisonment. I did not doubt that it was the work of Calderona; nevertheless, though I suspected that he had discovered the whole, I could not conceive how he had prevailed upon the Duke of Lerma to treat me so cruelly. Some-

*Segovia, a city of Old Castile in Spain, situated on the River Trio, over which is a noble aqueduct built by Trajan. The principal mint of Spain, is fixed in this city; and the woollen manufacture here is the best in all Spain. It is encompassed with strong walls, adorned with lofty towers. Here is also a famous university and bishoprick. It lies thirty-five miles north of Madrid.

times I imagined that I had been arrested without the knowledge of his excellency; and sometimes I thought that he himself was the cause of my misfortune, for some political reasons that often induce ministers to use their favourites in this manner.

I was strongly agitated by these different conjectures, when the light of day, penetrating through a little grate, presented to my view the horror of the place in which I was. I then grieved without moderation, and my eyes became two sources of tears, which the remembrance of my prosperity rendered inexhaustible. While I abandoned myself to my sorrow, a turnkey came into my dungeon, with a loaf and a pitcher of water, for the day's allowance. He looked at me, and observing that my face was bathed in tears, jailer as he was, felt an emotion of pity. 'Signior Prisoner,' said he, 'don't despair: you must not be so sensible of the vicissitudes of life; you are young, and will see better days. Meanwhile, eat the king's allowance with a good grace.'

My comforter went out when he had pronounced these words, to which I made no answer but by groans and lamentations. I spent the whole day in cursing my fate, without thinking of doing honour to my provision, which, to me, in my present situation, seemed not so much a present of the king's bounty, as the effect of his rage; since it served rather to prolong than assuage the pains of the unhappy.

Night, in the mean time, arrived, and immediately a great noise of keys attracted my attention. The door of my dungeon opened; and a moment after, a man entering with a candle in

his hand, approached me, saying, 'Signior Gil Blas, behold one of your old friends. I am that Don Andrea de Tordesillas who lived with you at Grenada, and was gentleman to the archbishop, while you was in favour with that prelate. You desired him, if you may remember, to employ his credit in my behalf, and by his interest I was named for an employment in Mexico: but, instead of embarking for the Indies, I stopped in the city of Alicant, where I married the daughter of him who commanded the castle, and by a train of adventures, which I shall recount to you by and by, I am now become keeper of the tower of Segovia. I have express orders to keep you from the speech of every living soul, to make you lie upon straw, and live upon bread and water only. But I have too much humanity not to pity your misfortune: besides, you have done me service; and my gratitude prevails over the orders which I have received. Far from being the instrument of that cruelty which they would exercise upon you, I intend to soften the rigour of your fate. Get up and follow me.'

Although Mr. Keeper well deserved my thanks, my understanding was so much disturbed, that I could not answer one word. I did not fail, however, to follow him, through a court, and up a narrow stair, to a small room, quite a-top of the tower. I was not a little surprised, when I entered the chamber, to see two lights burning in brazen candlesticks, and two handsome covers on a table. 'The victuals will be presently brought,' said Tordesillas; 'and we will sup here together. I have destined this retreat for your lodging, where you will live much more comfortably than in your dungeon. You will see from your win-

low the flowery banks of the Erema, and the delightful valley which extends from the feet of the mountains that separate the two Castiles, as far as Coca. I know that at first you will not be very sensible of such a fine prospect; but when the violence of your grief shall be mellowed by time into a soft melancholy, you will take pleasure in making an excursion with your eyes over such agreeable objects. Besides, you may be assured of being well provided in linen, and other necessaries befitting a gentleman of delicacy and taste. Moreover, you shall have a good bed, comfortable diet, and be furnished with as many books as you choose to read. In a word, you shall be as well treated as a prisoner can be.'

Finding myself a little eased by such obliging offers, I took courage, gave my jailer a thousand thanks, told him that he recalled me to life by his generous behaviour, and that I wished I might ever again have an opportunity of showing my gratitude. 'And why not have an opportunity?' he replied. 'Do you think you have lost your liberty for ever! You are mistaken; and I dare assure you, that you will be quit for a few months imprisonment.' 'What say you, Signior Don Andrea?' cried I; 'it seems then you know the cause of my misfortune.' 'I confess,' said he, 'I am not ignorant of the affair. The alguazil, who brought you hither, imparted the secret to me, and I shall now reveal it.

'He told me, that the king, being informed of your having, in concert with the Count de Lemos, carried the Prince of Spain to the house of a suspected lady, had, to punish you both, exiled the count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, to be treated with all the rigour which you have

experienced since your arrival.' 'And how,' said I, 'did this affair come to the knowledge of the king? it is that circumstance in particular of which I want to be informed.' 'And that circumstance,' he replied, 'is what I could not learn from the alguazil, who in all likelihood is himself ignorant of the matter.'

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several valets, who brought up supper. They put upon the table some bread, two cups, two bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which there was a ragout of hare, with plenty of onions, oil, and saffron; an olla podrida* in another; and the third contained a turkey-pout on a marmalade of berengena.† When Tordesillas saw that we had every thing we wanted, he sent away his servants, not caring that they should overhear our discourse; and having locked the door, we sat down at table opposite to one another. 'Let us begin,' said he, 'with what is most needful. You must have a good appetite, after a fast of two days.' So saying, he loaded my plate with victuals, imagining that he served one half starved; and really he had reason to think I would stuff myself with his ragouts. Nevertheless, I balked his expectation; and how much soever my condition required food, I could not swallow a morsel; so much did I take to heart my present situation. To dispel the cruel images which incessantly afflicted me, my keeper in vain exhorted me to drink, by extolling the excellency of his wine. Had he given me nectar, I

* *O'la podrida*, a dish composed of all sorts of food.

† *Berengena*, a fruit growing like a cucumber, and used like French beans, with mutton, &c.

should have drank it without pleasure at that time. He perceived my chagrin, and changing his battery, began to recount, in a pleasant manner, the history of his own marriage. But I heard his narration with such absence of thought, that, when it was ended, I could not have repeated one word of what he said. He concluded, that he undertook too much in attempting to divert my sorrow that evening; and when supper was over, got up, saying, 'Signior de Santillane, I will leave you to your repose, or, rather, to muse at leisure upon your misfortune. But, I repeat it again, it will not be of long duration: the king is naturally good; when his wrath subsides, and he shall reflect upon the deplorable situation in which he believes you to be, he will think you sufficiently punished.' So saying, Mr. Keeper went down stairs, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They carried off every thing, even to the candles, and I went to bed by the melancholy light of a lamp that was fixed to the wall.

CHAPTER V.

His reflections before he went to sleep, and an account of the noise that waked him.

I SPENT two hours at least in reflecting upon what Tordesillas had told me. 'I am confined here then,' said I to myself, 'for having contributed to the pleasures of the heir-apparent. How imprudent was I, in doing services of that

kind to so young a prince; for his tender years alone make me guilty! Had he been in a more advanced age, the king would, perhaps, have laughed at that which now incenses him so much. But who can have given such a piece of information to that monarch, without fearing the resentment of the prince, or that of the Duke of Lerma, who will, doubtless, revenge his nephew the Count de Lemos? How then has the king discovered it? that I cannot comprehend.'

Hither my doubts always returned. The idea, however, that afflicted me most, that drove me to despair, and from which my mind could not detach itself, was the pillage to which I concluded my effects had been abandoned. 'My strong box!' cried I; 'my dear riches, what is become of you? into whose hands are you fallen? Alas! I have lost you, even in less time than that in which you were amassed!' I painted to myself the disorder that must then reign in my house; and, on that subject, made reflections, every one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into an oppression that became favourable; and sleep, which had avoided me the preceding night, shed his influence over my senses. To this the goodness of the bed, the fatigue which I had undergone, as well as the vapours of the victuals and wine, contributed. I enjoyed a profound sleep; and, probably, the day would have surprised me in this condition, had I not been waked all of a sudden by a noise pretty extraordinary for a prison. I heard the sound of a guitar, accompanied with a man's voice. I listened with attention, and, hearing no more, believed it was a dream: but, in a moment, my ear was struck

again with the sound of the same instrument, and the same voice, which sung the following verses

Ay de mi! un ano felice
Parece un soplo ligero;
Pero fin dicha un instante
*Es un siglo te tormento.**

My sorrow was increased by this couplet, which seemed to have been made on purpose for me. 'I have but too well experienced the truth of these words,' said I: 'methinks the season of my prosperity passed away very soon, and that I have been already a whole age in prison.' I relapsed into a terrible reverie, and began again to deplore my fate, as if I had taken pleasure in the task. My lamentations, however, ended with the night; and the first rays of the sun, with which my chamber was enlightened, a little calmed my disquiet. I got up to air my room, by opening the window, and surveyed the country, of which I remembered Mr. Keeper had given such a fine description. But I could find nothing to justify what he had said; the Erema, which I imagined was at least equal to the Tagus, appeared to be no more than a rivulet; its flowery banks were bedecked with the nettle and thistle only; and the pretended delightful valley presented nothing to my view but lands for the most part barren and uncultivated. Probably, I was not yet arrived at that sweet melancholy, which made things appear otherwise than I beheld them at that time.

I began to put on my clothes, and was already

* Alas! a year of pleasure passes like a fleeting breeze; but a moment of misfortune seems an age of pain.

half dressed, when Tordesillas came in, followed by an old woman servant, who brought shirts and towels for my use. 'Signior Gil Blas,' said he, 'here is linen: don't be frugal of it; for I shall take care to let you have as much as you can use. Well,' added he; 'how did you pass the night? were your sorrows suspended for a few moments by sleep?' 'I should have slept, perhaps, till now,' answered I, 'had I not been awaked by a voice accompanied by a guitar.' 'The cavalier who has disturbed your repose,' said he, 'is a state-prisoner, whose chamber is contiguous to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and has a very amiable character: his name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may, if you please, visit and eat with one another. You will find a mutual consolation in each other's acquaintance, which will be very agreeable to both.'

I assured Don Andrea that I was extremely sensible of his kindness in permitting me to unite my grief with that of the cavalier; and as I expressed some impatience to be acquainted with that companion in misfortune, our obliging keeper procured me the pleasure that very day; and carried me to dinner with Don Gaston, who surprised me with his beauty and fine shape. You may judge what he must be, to make such a strong impression upon eyes accustomed to behold the most shining youth at court. Imagine to yourself a man made for love, one of those heroes of romance, who, by showing themselves only, could rob princesses of their rest. Add to this, that Nature, which usually deals out her gifts sparingly, had endued Cogollos with a

great deal of understanding and valour; so that he was a perfect cavalier.

If I was charmed by this knight, I had also the good fortune to be agreeable to him. He no more sung in the night, for fear of incommoding me, notwithstanding my entreaties that he would not constrain himself on my account. An intimacy is soon contracted between two persons oppressed by misfortune. A tender friendship was the immediate consequence of our acquaintance, and became stronger and stronger every day. The liberty we enjoyed of conversing together when we pleased, was very useful to us both; since, by our discourse, we aided one another, reciprocally, to bear our misfortunes with patience.

One afternoon, entering his room, just as he was going to play on his guitar, that I might hear him the more conveniently, I sat down on a stool, which was all the seat he had; and he, placing himself on his bed's feet, played a very moving air, and sung words to it, which expressed the despair to which the cruelty of a lady reduced her lover. When he had done, I said to him, with a smile, 'Signior Knight, these are words which you was never obliged to employ in your amours: you are too accomplished to find the women cruel.' 'You have too good an opinion of me,' he replied; 'I composed, in my own behalf, the verses which you have heard, to soften a heart which I believed harder than diamond, and move to compassion a lady who treated me with extreme rigour. I must entertain you with that story, by which you will also learn the cause of my misfortune.

CHAPTER VI.

The history of Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Donna Helena de Galisteo.

'Not much less than four years ago, I set out from Madrid for Coria, to visit Donna Eleanora de Laxarilla, my aunt, one of the richest widows in Old Castile, whose heir I am. I was no sooner arrived at her house, than love began to invade my repose. The windows of my apartment faced the lattices of a lady who lived opposite to my aunt's house; and I could easily perceive her by the assistance of the width of her grates, and the narrowness of the street. I did not neglect the opportunity; and found my neighbour so handsome, that I was enchanted at once. I expressed my passion so plainly, by my eyes, that she could not be mistaken. She perceived it accordingly; but was not at all disposed to pride herself in the discovery, and still less to answer my coquetries.

'I made inquiries about this dangerous person who captivated hearts so suddenly; and learned that her name was Donna Helena; that she was the only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, who possessed a rich manor a few leagues from Coria; that many matches had been in her offer; but her father rejected them all, because he was resolved to give her in marriage to his nephew Don Augustine de Olighera, who, in the mean time, had the privilege of seeing and conversing with his cousin every day. I was not discouraged by this piece of information; on the contrary, it inflamed my passion; and the proud pleasure of

supplanting a beloved rival excited me, perhaps, even more than my love, to pursue my point. I continued, then, to address Helena with the most passionate looks: I supplicated her maid Felicia in the same language, in order to implore her assistance. I even talked on my fingers: but these gallantries were of no use. I made as little impression on the maid as on her mistress; they seemed equally cruel and inaccessible.

'Since they refused to answer the language of my eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters; and set people to work to discover what acquaintances Felicia had in town. They got notice that an old gentlewoman, called Theodora, was her best friend, and that they often visited one another. Overjoyed at this discovery, I went to Theodora in person, and, by presents, engaged her in my interest. She espoused my cause, promised to procure for me a private conversation with her friend at her house, and kept her promise the very next day. "I am no longer unhappy," said I to Felicia; "since my misfortunes have excited your compassion. How much am I indebted to your friend, for having prevailed upon you to grant me the satisfaction of an interview!" "Signior," answered she, "Theodora can do any thing with me: she has engaged me in your behalf; and if it be in my power to make you happy, you shall soon enjoy your wish; but, with all my good will, I don't know that I can give you much assistance; for, not to flatter you, you have never formed a more difficult enterprise. You are in love with a lady, who is prepossessed in favour of another cavalier and what sort of a lady! one so full of pride and dissimulation, that if, by dint of perseverance and

assiduity, you should succeed so far as to cost her some sighs, don't imagine that her pride will give you the pleasure of hearing them." "Ah! my dear Felicia!" cried I, in a transport of grief, "why do you describe the obstacles which I have to surmount? I am assassinated by your information! deceive me rather than drive me to despair!" So saying, I took one of her hands, and pressing it in mine, put upon her finger a diamond worth three hundred pistoles, accompanied by such moving expressions as brought the tears into her eyes.

'She was too much affected by my discourse, and too well satisfied by my behaviour, to leave me altogether without consolation. She began to smooth the difficulties a little, saying, "Signior, what I have represented ought not to deprive you of hope. Your rival, 'tis true, is not hated; he is at liberty to come and visit his cousin, and talk to her whenever he pleases; and this is a circumstance favourable for you. Their being accustomed to see one another every day, renders their conversation a little languid; they seem to part without pain, and meet again without pleasure; one would think they were already married. In a word, I don't perceive that my mistress has a violent passion for Don Augustine: besides, as to personal qualifications, there is a difference between you and him, that must turn to your account in the eyes of such a delicate young lady as Donna Helena. Be not discouraged, therefore; continue your gallantry, which I will second; and I will not let slip one opportunity of making every thing you do to please her tend to your advantage with my mistress. In vain shall she attempt to disguise her sentiments

I will soon discover them, in spite of her dissimulation."

'After this conversation, Felicia and I parted, very well satisfied with one another. I prepared anew to ogle Don George's daughter, whom I treated with a serenade, in which the verses you have heard were sung by a fine voice, which I had provided for the purpose. After the concert, the maid, in order to sound her mistress, asked how she had been entertained. "The voice," said Donna Helena, "gave me pleasure." "And were not the words which were sung very moving?" replied the maid. "I paid no attention to them," said the lady; "I listened to the tune only; I took no notice of the verses, neither do I desire to know who gave the serenade." "If that be the case," cried the waiting-woman, "poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is far out in his reckoning, and not very wise in spending his time in looking at our lattices." "Perhaps it may not be he," said the mistress, coldly, "but some other cavalier, who has declared his passion for me by this concert." "Pardon me, madam," replied Felicia; "it is no other than Don Gaston; by this token, that he accosted me this morning, in the street, and begged me to tell you, that he adores you, in spite of the rigour with which you repay his love; and that, in short, he should think himself the happiest of mankind, if you would allow him to manifest his passion in the usual course of gallantry. This discourse," added she, "sufficiently proves that I am not mistaken."

'Don George's daughter changed countenance all of a sudden, and darting a severe look at her maid, "You might have dispensed," said she, "with repeating that impertinent conversation to

me Let me have no such reports for the future, if you please; and if that rash youth shall have the presumption to speak to you again, tell him to make his addresses to one who will regard his gallantry more than I do, and to choose a more honourable pastime than that of being all day long at his windows, to observe what I do in my apartment."

'All this was faithfully reported to me, in a second interview with Felicia, who, pretending that I must not take the words of her mistress in a literal sense, would have persuaded me that the affair went on swimmingly; but I, who was ignorant of finesse, and did not believe that the text could be explained in my favour, distrusted the commentary she made. She laughed at my diffidence, called for paper and ink, and said, "Signior Knight, write immediately to Donna Helena in the style of a desponding lover. Paint your sufferings in the most passionate colours; and, in particular, complain of her prohibiting you to appear at your windows. Promise to obey her; but at the same time assure her, that it will cost you your life. Put this into such expressions as you gentlemen are so well skilled in, and leave the rest to me. I hope the event will do more honour to my penetration than you imagine."

'Had I neglected this, I should have been the first lover who did not take the advantage of such an opportunity to write to his mistress. I composed a most pathetic letter; and, before I sealed it, showed it to Felicia, who, having read it, said, with a smile, that if women have the art of captivating the men, these last, in return, know very well how to cajole the women. The waiting

maid took my letter, then laying strong injunctions on me to keep my windows shut for a few days, returned to the house of Don George.

"Madam," said she to Donna Helena, when she went home, "I met Don Gaston, who did not fail to make up to me, and endeavoured to sooth me with flattering expressions. He asked, with a faltering voice, like a criminal who expects his sentence, if I had delivered his message to you. Then I, faithful and ready to execute your orders, cut him short with a vengeance; inveighed against him, loaded him with reproaches, and left him in the street confounded at my petulance." "I am overjoyed," replied Donna Helena, "that you have rid me of that importunate young fellow; but there was no occasion to speak rudely to him. A young woman ought always to be gentle in her behaviour." "Madam," said the maid, "a passionate lover is not to be banished by words pronounced with a gentle air. Nay, this is seldom accomplished even by indignation and rage. Don Gaston, for example, was not repulsed. After having loaded him with reproaches, (as I have said) I went to the house of your relation, whither you sent me; and that lady unfortunately detained me too long: I say too long, because, on my return, I found my man again, who, I assure you, I did not expect to see. I was so much disturbed at sight of him, that my tongue, which never failed me before, could not furnish me with one syllable. In the mean time, what does he? he slipt a paper into my hand, which I kept, without knowing what I did, and then disappeared in an instant."

'So saying, she pulled my letter out of her bosom, and gave it by way of joke to her mis-

tress; who taking it as for diversion, read it over, and then affecting reserve, "Truly, Felicia," said she, with a serious air, "you are a fool and a mad creature to receive this billet. What will Don Gaston think of it? and what must I believe? Your conduct gives me cause to distrust your fidelity, and may make him suspect that I am pleased with his passion. Alas! perhaps he imagines, at this instant, that I peruse with pleasure the characters which he has wrote. You see to what shame you have exposed my pride." "O, not at all, madam!" replied the maid; "he can entertain no such thoughts; and suppose he did, he shall not preserve them long. I will tell him, when next I see him, that I have shown his letter to you; that you looked at it with indifference; and, in short, without reading it, tore it with the most mortifying contempt." "You may safely swear that I have not read it," said Donna Helena. "I should be at a loss, if obliged, to repeat two single words of it." Don George's daughter was contented with talking in this manner; she tore my billet, and forbid her woman to talk to me for the future.

'As I promised to play the gallant no more at my windows, since the sight of me gave offence, I kept them shut several days, to render my obedience more affecting; but to supply those looks of which I was abridged, I prepared new serenades for my cruel Helen. One night I repaired under her balcony with musicians; and the guitars were already struck up, when a cavalier came sword in hand, and disturbed the concert, laying about him at a furious rate among the performers, who immediately betook themselves to flight. The rage which animated that bold intruder

awaked mine: I advanced to punish him, and an obstinate combat began. Donna Helena and her attendant hearing the noise of swords, looked through the lattice, and seeing two men engaged, waked Don George and his valets with their cries; these, as well as several people in the neighbourhood, came running to part the combatants, but they arrived too late, and found nobody on the field of battle, but a cavalier almost without life, weltering in his own blood; and I was soon known to be that unfortunate person. I was carried to the house of my aunt, whither the most expert surgeons in town were called to my assistance. Every body pitied my fate, and Donna Helena in particular, who then discovered the bottom of her soul. Her dissimulation gave way to her sentiment, and she was no longer that disdainful creature who piqued herself upon appearing insensible to my passion. She was now a tender lover, that abandoned herself to sorrow without reserve. She spent the rest of the night in mourning with her maid, and in cursing her cousin Don Augustine de Olighera, who they concluded must have been the author of their tears; as in effect it was he who had so disagreeably interrupted the serenade. Being as great a dissembler as his cousin, he had perceived my intentions, without seeming to take any notice of them; and imagining that she favoured my flame, had committed this action, to show that he was not quite so passive as she believed him to be. Nevertheless, this melancholy accident was soon forgotten, by reason of the joy that followed it. Though I was dangerously wounded, the skill of the surgeons saved my life; but I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Donna Eleanora went

to Don George, and demanded his daughter for me in marriage. The father consented to this the more willingly, because he at that time looked upon Don Augustine as a man whom, perhaps, he should never see again. The good old gentleman was afraid that his daughter would not bestow herself on me without reluctance, because her cousin Olighera had enjoyed the liberty of visiting her when he would, and of acquiring her affection at leisure; but she seemed so well disposed to obey her father in this affair, that we may conclude it is an advantage among the ladies, to be a new comer, in Spain, as well as elsewhere.

'As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, I understood how much afflicted her mistress had been at the bad success of my duel; so that having no longer any reason to doubt that I was the Paris of this Helen, I blessed my wound, since it turned out so propitious to my love; and obtained of Signior Don George the permission of speaking to his daughter in presence of her maid. What a delightful conversation this was! I entreated, I pressed the lady in such a manner, to tell me if her father, in yielding her to my tenderness, had done any violence to her inclination, that she owned I was not beholden to her obedience alone. After this charming confession, my whole study was to please her, and contrive entertainments, until the day of our nuptials, which were to be celebrated by a magnificent cavalcade, in which all the nobility of Coria and the neighbourhood intended to appear.

'I gave a grand entertainment to Don George and his daughter, with all their relations and

friends, at a superb country-house which my aunt had without the town, on the side of Manroi. Here a concert of vocal and instrumental music was prepared by my order, together with a company of strollers to represent a comedy. In the middle of the feast, one came and whispered to me, that there was a man in the hall who wanted to speak with me. I got up from table to see who it was, and found a stranger, who looked like a valet de chambre, and who presented to me a letter, which I opened, and read these words:

"If you have a regard for your honour, as every knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to be to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi, where you will find a cavalier ready to give satisfaction for the injury you received from him, and put you, if he can, out of a condition to espouse Donna Helena.

DON AUG. DE OLIGHERA."

'If love has great influence over the Spaniards, revenge has still more. I could not read this billet in tranquillity. The very name of Don Augustine kindled a fire in my veins, which had almost made me forget the indispensable duty which I had that day to perform. I was tempted to steal away from the company, and go in search of my enemy on the instant. I constrained myself, however, for fear of disturbing the feast, and said to the man who brought the letter, "Friend, tell the cavalier who sent you, that I am too desirous of re-engaging him, to fail of meeting him to-morrow morning before sun-rise, at the appointed place."

'Having sent away the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my guests, and resumed my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had the least suspicion of what passed within me. I appeared, during the rest of the day, as much entertained as any of them with the pleasures of the feast, which ended about midnight, when the assembly broke up, and every one returned to the town, in the same manner as he had come out. As for my part, I staid in the country-house, on pretence of taking the air next morning; but the true reason was, that I might be the sooner at the rendezvous. Instead of going to bed, I waited with impatience for day, which as soon as I perceived, I mounted my best horse, and set out alone, as if I intended to take a ride in the country. I advanced towards Manroi, and discovered in the plain a man on horseback, coming towards me with full speed; upon which I put spurs to my horse, to save him one-half of the way. We soon met, and I found it was my rival. "Knight," said he, in an insolent tone, "it is with regret that I come to blows with you a second time; but it is your own fault. After the adventure of the serenade, you ought to have renounced Don George's daughter with a good grace, or at least have concluded that you would not be so easily quit, if you persisted in your addresses to her." "You are too proud," answered I, "of an advantage which perhaps you owed more to the darkness of the night, than to your superior skill. You don't consider that the success of these rencounters depends often on accident." "It is never accidental with me," said he, with an arrogant air; "and I will now show you, that, by day as

well as night, I know how to punish those audacious knights who interfere with me."

'I made no reply to this haughty speech, but alighted instantly. Don Augustine did the same: we tied our horses to a tree, and began to fight with equal vigour. I will frankly own, that I had to do with an enemy who pushed much better than I, although I had been two years at schools. He was a complete fencer; I could not possibly have exposed my life to greater danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens, that the strongest is vanquished by the weakest, my rival, in spite of all his skill, received a thrust that went through his heart, and he fell stone-dead in an instant.

'I returned immediately to the country-house, where I informed a valet de chambre, whom I could trust, of what had happened, and said to him, "Dear Ramira, before justice can take cognizance of this event, take a good horse, and give my aunt notice of the adventure. Ask of her some money and jewels, and bring them to me at Placentia, where thou wilt find me in the first inn you come to as you enter the city."

'Ramira acquitted himself of his commission with such diligence, that he arrived at Placentia three hours after me. He told me, that Donna Eleanora was more pleased than afflicted at the news of a duel that revenged the affront that I had received in the first; and that she had sent me all her ready-money and jewels, to enable me to travel agreeably in foreign countries, until she should get the affair accommodated.

'To pass over superfluous circumstances, I will only inform you, that I crossed New Castile to the kingdom of Valencia, in order to embark at Denia, from whence I took passage for Italy,

where I put myself in a condition to visit different courts, and appear in a suitable character.

'While, far from my Helen, I endeavoured, as much as in me lay, to beguile my love and sorrows, she mourned my absence in secret at Coria. Instead of approving of the prosecution that her family set on foot against me on account of Olighera's death, she wished that all enmity might cease, and my return be hastened by a speedy accommodation. Six months had already elapsed since she had lost me, and I believe her constancy would have still triumphed over time, had she had nothing else but time to combat: but she had still more powerful enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western side of Galicia, came to Coria, to take possession of a rich estate, which had been in vain disputed by his cousin Don Miguel de Capara; and he settled in that country, finding it more agreeable than his own. Combados was well made, had an agreeable polite behaviour, and was one of the most insinuating men in the world; so that he soon became acquainted with all the people of fashion in the town, and was no stranger to their private affairs.

'It was not long before he learned that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed to inflame the men only for their ruin. This piqued his curiosity; he longed to see such a formidable lady: for this purpose he sought the friendship of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old man already looked upon him as his son-in-law, gave him admittance to his house, and the liberty of speaking in his presence to Donna Helena. The Galician soon fell in love with her: that was inevitable. He opened his heart to Don

George, who consented to his proposal, but told him, that, resolving not to constrain his daughter, he left her mistress of her own hand. Upon this, Don Blas put in practice all the gallantries which he could devise, to please the lady, who seemed insensible to them all, so much was her heart engrossed by me. Felicia, however, was in the interests of the cavalier, who engaged her by presents to espouse his cause. She therefore employed all her address in behalf of his passion; on the other hand, her father seconded the chambermaid by his remonstrances: and nevertheless, all their efforts, during a whole year, could only torment Donna Helena, without shaking her constancy in the least.

'Combados, seeing that Don George and Felicia interested themselves for him in vain, proposed an expedient to overcome the obstinacy of a lover so prepossessed as she was. "This," said he, "is what I have contrived: we will suppose that a merchant of Coria has received a letter from an Italian factor, in which, after a detail of things concerning commerce, are the following words:

"A SPANISH cavalier, whose name is Don Gaston de Cogollos, has lately arrived at the court of Parma. He calls himself nephew and sole heir of a rich widow who lives at Coria, under the name of Donna Eleanora de Laxarilla. He has demanded the daughter of a powerful nobleman in marriage, but will not succeed until the truth is known. I am desired to apply to you for this purpose: pray let me know then if you are acquainted with this Don Gaston, and in what the

riches of his aunt consist, for your answer will decide the marriage. Parma," &c.

'The old man looked upon this trick as a piece of wit or stratagem pardonable in love; and the waiting-woman, still less scrupulous than her master, approved of it very much. The invention seemed to them the more ingenious, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking an instantaneous resolution, provided she should have no suspicion of the cheat. Don George undertook to inform her of my change; and, to make the thing seem more natural, carried along with him the merchant who had received the pretended letter from Parma. The scheme was executed accordingly. The father, in an affected passion of rage and vexation, said to Helena, "Daughter, I will no longer observe to you, that my relations daily request that I will not admit the murderer of Don Augustine into my family. I have a stronger reason to give you to-day, in order to detach you from Don Gaston. You ought to be ashamed of your fidelity to him. He is a fickle perfidious wretch. Here is a certain proof of his infidelity. Read this letter, which a merchant of Coria has received from Italy." Helena, trembling, took the fictitious letter, read it over, considered every expression, and was thunderstruck at the news of my inconstancy. A sentiment of tenderness made her shed some tears; but soon recalling all her pride, she dried them up, and said to her father, with a resolute tone, "Signior, you have been witness of my weakness; bear witness also of the victory I gain over myself. 'Tis done. I now despise Don Gaston, and look upon him as the lowest of man-

kind. But let us talk no more about him. Come; I am ready to follow Don Blas to the altar: let my marriage precede that of the perfidious man who has so ill repaid my love." Don George, transported with joy at these words, embraced his daughter; applauded her vigorous resolution; and, glad of the happy success of his stratagem, made haste to complete the wishes of my rival.

'Donna Helena was thus ravished from me. She yielded herself suddenly to Combados, without listening to love, which, at the bottom of her heart, spoke in my behalf, or even doubting a moment a piece of news which might have been suspected in a lover of less credulity. The haughty maid listened to nothing but her pride; and the resentment of the injury, which she thought her beauty had received, prevailed over the interest of her tenderness. A few days after her marriage, however, she felt some remorse for having been so precipitate. She reflected that the merchant's letter might have been feigned, and that suspicion gave her some uneasiness; but the amorous Don Blas gave his wife no time to cherish thoughts prejudicial to her repose. His whole study was to amuse her; and in this he succeeded by a continual succession of various pleasures, which he had art enough to invent.

'She seemed very well satisfied with such a gallant husband, and they lived together in perfect harmony, when my aunt accommodated my affair with the relations of Don Augustine, and wrote immediately to Italy, to advertise me of her success. Being then at Regio, in the furthermost part of Calabria, I went over into Sicily, from thence to Spain, and at length repaired to Coria, on the wings of love. Donna Eleanora,

who had not in her letter mentioned the marriage of Don George's daughter, informed me of it on my arrival, and observing that I was afflicted at the news; "You are in the wrong, nephew," said she, "to be so much grieved at the loss of an unfaithful woman. Take my advice, and banish from your memory a person unworthy of possessing a place in it."

'As my aunt was ignorant of the deceit which had been practised on Donna Helena, she was in the right to talk in this manner, and could not have given me a more prudent advice; which, therefore, I promised to follow, or at least to affect an air of indifference, if I should find myself incapable of vanquishing my passion. I could not, however, resist my curiosity, to know how this marriage had been made; and, to be informed of the particulars, I resolved to apply to Felicia's friend, Dame Theodora, whom I have mentioned before. I went to her house, and there, by accident, found Felicia; who, expecting nothing less than to see me, was confounded, and endeavoured to go away, that she might avoid an explanation, which she concluded I would demand. I stopped her, saying, "Why do you fly me? Is not the perjured Helena satisfied with having made a sacrifice of my happiness? has she forbid you to hear my complaints? or do you only want to escape me, that you may make a merit with the ungrateful woman of having refused me the hearing?"

"Signior," answered the waiting-woman, "I freely own myself confounded at your presence. I cannot behold you again, without feeling my heart torn with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have been an unfortunate accom-

place in seducing her." "O heaven!" cried I, "have you the presumption to tell me so? Explain yourself immediately." Then she gave me an account of the stratagem which Combados had practised to rob me of Donna Helena; and, perceiving that her detail pierced me to the very soul, strove to give me some consolation: she offered me her good offices with her mistress, promised to disabuse her, to paint my despair; in a word, to spare nothing to soften the rigour of my destiny: in fine, she gave me hopes that assuaged my sorrows a little.

'I pass over the infinite contradictions she underwent before she could prevail upon Donna Helena to see me. This, however, she accomplished; and it was concerted between them, that I should be privately admitted into the house of Don Blas, the first time he should go to an estate where he usually spent a day or two in hunting. This design was soon put in execution: the husband set out for the country; I was informed of the occasion, and one night introduced into his wife's apartment.

'I would have begun the conversation with reproaches; but my mouth was stopped. "It is in vain to recall what is past," said the lady; "the business here is not a fond reconciliation; and you are mistaken if you believe me disposed to flatter your inclination. I declare to you, Don Gaston, that my only motive for giving my consent to this private interview, in consequence of the pressing instances which have been made, is to tell you from my own mouth, that henceforth you must study to forget me altogether. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my fate, had it been joined to yours; but since heaven

hath ordained it otherwise, I cheerfully submit to its decrees!"

"How, madam!" answered I, "is it not enough that I have lost you, and see the happy Don Blas in quiet possession of the only person I am capable of loving? Must I also banish you from my thoughts? You would deprive me of my love, and rob me of the only blessing that now remains! Ah, cruel woman! do you think it possible for any man whom you have once charmed, to retrieve his heart? Know yourself better; and cease exhorting me in vain to chase your idea from my remembrance." "Well, then," she replied, with precipitation; "do you also cease to hope that I will favour your love with any return. I have but one word to say: the wife of Don Blas shall never be the lover of Don Gaston. Take your measures accordingly: fly from this place; and let us put a speedy end to a conversation with which I upraid myself, in spite of the purity of my intentions, and which I shall think myself guilty in prolonging."

'At these words, which deprived me of the least glimpse of hope, I fell at her feet; I addressed her in the most pathetic manner; I even employed tears to melt her; but all this served only to excite, perhaps, some sentiments of pity, which she was careful of concealing, and which were sacrificed to her duty. After having, to no purpose, exhausted all my moving expressions, by prayers and tears, my tenderness changed of a sudden into rage. I unsheathed my sword, to stab myself before the eyes of the inexorable Helena; who no sooner perceived my intention, than she threw herself upon me, to prevent the consequence. "Hold, Cogollos!" said she, "is

Is thus you consult my reputation! In depriving yourself of life, you are going to load me with dishonour, and make my husband pass for an assassin."

'I was so possessed with despair, that, far from yielding to these words the attention which they deserved, my whole endeavour was to baffle the efforts of the mistress and her maid to save me from my own fatal design; and, without doubt, I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas, (who, having been apprized of our interview, instead of going to the country, had concealed himself behind the tapestry, to hear our conversation) had not come and joined us with all expedition. "Don Gaston," cried he, holding my arms, "recall your scattered reason, and do not basely yield to the fury that transports you."

"Is it your business," said I, interrupting Don Blas, "to dissuade me from my design? You ought rather, with your own hand, to plunge a poniard into my bosom. You are injured by my passion, unfortunate as it is. Is it not enough that you surprise me at night in your wife's apartment? Is there more required to rouse your revenge? Stab me at once, and rid yourself of a man who cannot cease adoring Donna Helena until he ceases to live." "In vain," answered Don Blas, "you endeavour to interest my honour so far, as to give you death: you are sufficiently punished by your rashness; and I am so well pleased with the virtuous sentiments of my wife, that I pardon the occasion which she took to show them. Take my advice, Cogollos," answered he; "do not despair, like a weak lover, but submit to necessity with courage."

'The prudent Galician, by such discourse, calmed my rage a little, and waked my virtue: I retired, with a design of removing far from Helena, and the place that she inhabited; and in two days returned to Madrid; where, resolving to employ myself wholly in making my fortune, I appeared at court, and there began to make friends; but I was so unlucky as to attach myself in particular to the Marquis of Villareal, a Portuguese nobleman; who, being suspected of a design to deliver Portugal from the dominion of Spain, was imprisoned in the castle of Alicant, where he now remains. As the Duke of Lerma knew that an intimacy subsisted between that nobleman and me, he caused me to be arrested also, and conducted to this place. That minister believes that I am capable of being an accomplice in such a scheme; and he could not have committed a greater outrage upon a noble Castilian.'

Here Don Gaston left off speaking; and I, to console him, said, 'Signior Cavalier, your honour can receive no stain from his disgrace, which will, doubtless, in the end, turn to your advantage. When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will certainly bestow upon you a considerable employment, in order to re-establish the reputation of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.'

CHAPTER VII.

Scipio finds Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and tells him a great deal of news.

Our conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who, coming into the chamber, addressed himself to me in these terms: 'Signior Gil Blas, I have been speaking to a young man who presented himself at the prison-gate, and asked if you was not in confinement here. When I refused to satisfy his curiosity, he seemed very much mortified. "Noble captain," said he, with tears in his eyes, "don't reject the humble request I make, to know if Signior de Santillane is in this place. I am his chief domestic, and you will do a charitable action in allowing me to see him. You are looked upon in Segovia as a gentleman of great humanity; and I hope you will not refuse me the favour of conversing a moment with my dear master, who is not so guilty as unfortunate." In short,' continued Don Andrea, 'the young man expressed such a desire of seeing you, that I have promised to give him that satisfaction at night.'

I assured Tordesillas, that he could not do me a greater pleasure than to admit that young man, who, probably, had something to communicate which it imported me very much to know. I waited with impatience for the moment that was to offer my faithful Scipio to my eyes; for I did not doubt that it was he; and I was not mistaken. He was introduced into the tower in the evening; and his joy, which mine alone could equal, broke

forth in extraordinary transports, when he saw me. For my part, I was so much overjoyed at the sight of him, that I held out my arms, and he hugged me in his without ceremony: the distinction between the master and secretary was lost in this embrace; so glad were they to see one another.

When we were a little disengaged, I interrogated Scipio about the condition in which he left my house. 'You have no house,' he replied; 'and, to spare you the trouble of asking unnecessary questions, I will tell you in two words, what passed at home. Your effects were pillaged, as well by the soldiers as by your own servants; who, looking upon you as a lost man, paid themselves their own wages with what they could carry off. Luckily for you, I had the address to save from their talons two large bags of double pistoles, which I took out of your strong box, and secured, by putting them into the custody of Salero, who will redeliver them as soon as you shall be released from this tower; where I believe you will not be long boarded at his majesty's expense, because you was apprehended without the knowledge of the Duke of Lerma.'

I asked how he came to know that his excellency had no hand in my misfortune. 'Oh! as for that,' said he, 'I took care to be well informed: a friend of mine, who enjoys the confidence of the Duke d'Uzeda, told me all the particulars of your imprisonment. "Calderona," said he, "having discovered, by the officiousness of a valet, that Signiora Sirena, under another name, received the Prince of Spain in the night time; and that this intrigue was conducted by the Count de Lemos, with the assistance of Signior de San

tillana, resolved to be revenged upon them, as well as upon his mistress. With this view, he went privately to the Duke d'Uzeda, and discovered the whole affair. The duke, ravished at having in his hand such a fair opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to use it: he informed the king of what he had heard; and represented to him, with great zeal, the perils to which the prince had been exposed. This piece of news roused the indignation of his majesty, who immediately ordered Sirena to be shut up in the house of correction, banished the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment." This,' added Scipio, 'is what my friend told me; by which you see that your misfortune is the work of the Duke d'Uzeda, or rather of Calderona.'

From this information, I imagined that my affairs might be retrieved in time; that the Duke of Lerma, piqued at his nephew's exile, would exert himself to have that nobleman recalled to court; and I flattered myself, that I should not be forgotten by his excellency. What a fine thing hope is! it consoled me all of a sudden for the loss of my effects, which had been stolen, and made me as merry as if I had cause to be so. Far from regarding my prison as an unhappy abode, where I should perhaps end my days, it appeared rather as the means which fortune had used to raise me to some great post; for I reasoned with myself in this manner: 'The partizans for the prime-minister are, Don Fernando Borgio, Father Jerome of Florence, and, in particular, Brother Lewis d'Aliaga, who owes to his interest the place he at present possesses at court. With the assistance of these powerful

friends, his excellency will demolish all his foes; or perhaps the state will soon alter its appearance: his majesty is very sickly; and as soon as he shall be no more, the prince, his son, will begin his reign by recalling the count de Lemos, who will immediately release me from this place, and present me to the new monarch, who will load me with favours.' Thus already elevated with future pleasures, I scarce felt my present misfortune; but I believe the two bags of doubloons, which my secretary told me he had deposited with the goldsmith, contributed, as much as this hope, to the sudden change of my disposition.

I was too well satisfied with the zeal and integrity of Scipio, to be silent on that subject: I offered him the half of the money which he had preserved from the pillage; but this he refused. 'I expect,' said he, 'another mark of acknowledgment.' As much surprised at his discourse as at his refusal, I asked what I could do for him. 'Don't let us part,' answered he; 'allow me to attach my fortune to yours: I have a friendship for you which I never felt for any other master.' 'And I can assure thee, child,' said I, 'there is no love lost; the very moment thou camest to offer thy service, I was pleased with thy appearance: we must have been born under the Balance of Gemini, which are said to be the two constellations that unite the friendship of men. I willingly accept the society thou hast proposed; and will begin it, by entreating the keeper to shut thee up with me in this tower.' 'Nothing can give me more pleasure,' cried he; 'you anticipate my desire. I was just going to conjure you to ask that favour of him: your company is

dearer to me than liberty itself. I will only sometimes go to Madrid on the scout, and see if some change may not have happened at court which can be favourable to you: so that in me you will enjoy at once a confidant, courier, and spy.'

These advantages were too considerable to be rejected: I therefore kept along with me a person so useful, with the permission of the obliging keeper, who could not refuse me such an agreeable consolation.

CHAPTER VIII.

The motives and success of Scipio's first journey to Madrid. Gil Blas falls sick; the consequence of his distemper.

If it be usually observed, that we have no greater enemies than our domestics, it must likewise be owned, that, when they happen to be faithful and affectionate, they are our best friends. After the zeal that Scipio had manifested, I could not look upon him but as another self. There was, therefore, no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary; no more ceremony; they lodged together in the same room, using the same table and bed.

There was a great deal of gayety in Scipio's conversation; he might have been justly surnamed the Good-humoured Lad: besides, he had a good head, and I profitted by his advice. 'Friend,' said I to him one day, 'methinks it would be no bad scheme for me to write to the Duke of Lerma: this could produce no bad effect: what is

thy opinion of the matter?' 'Yes; but,' answered he, 'the great are so different from themselves, at different times, that I don't know how your letter will be received: nevertheless, I am of opinion that you should write in the mean time. Although the minister loves you, you must not trust to his friendship for being remembered by him: these kind of patrons easily forget those who are out of sight or hearing.'

Although this was but too true, I replied, 'I judge more favourably of my patron, to whose kindness for me I am no stranger: I am persuaded that he pities my affliction, which incessantly presents itself to his mind: he probably waits until the king's wrath shall subside, before he takes me out of prison.' 'In good time!' he resumed; 'I wish your opinion of his excellency may be right: implore his assistance then by a moving letter, which I will carry to him; and I promise to deliver it into his own hand.'

I immediately called for paper and ink, and composed a morsel of eloquence which Scipio thought very pathetic, and Tordesillas preferred even to the homilies of the Archbishop of Grenada.

I flattered myself, that the Duke of Lerma would be moved with compassion, in reading the melancholy account which I gave him of the miserable condition in which I was; and in that confidence despatched my courier; who no sooner arrived at Madrid, than he went to the minister's house, and met a valet de chambre of my acquaintance, who procured for him an opportunity of speaking to the duke. 'My lord,' said Scipio, presenting to his excellency the packet with which he was entrusted, 'one of your most

faithful servants, stretched upon straw, in a dismal dungeon of the tower of Segovia, most humbly entreats your grace to read this letter, which a turnkey, out of pity, gave him liberty and means to write.' The minister opened and perused the letter; but although he beheld in it a picture capable of melting the most obdurate soul, far from seeming affected at my distress, he raised his voice, and, in the hearing of several persons present, said to the courier, with a furious air, 'Friend, tell Santillane, that he has a great deal of assurance to address himself to me after the unworthy action he has committed, and for which he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch who must not depend upon my protection; for I abandon him to the resentment of the king.'

Scipio, in spite of all his effrontery, was disconcerted at this discourse; but, notwithstanding his confusion, endeavoured to intercede for me. 'My lord,' he resumed, 'the poor prisoner will die of grief when he hears the answer of your excellency.' The duke made no reply to my mediator but by a stern look, and turned his back upon him. It was thus the minister treated me, the better to conceal the part he had in the amorous intrigue of the Prince of Spain; and this ought to be a warning to all little agents whom noblemen use in their secret and dangerous negotiations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and made me acquainted with the success of his commission, I was plunged into the dire abyss of despondency in which I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I thought myself even still more unhappy, since I had now no reason to expect the protection of the Duke of Lerma.

My courage sunk apace; and, notwithstanding all that they could say to raise it again, I became a prey to the most keen sorrow, which threw me by degrees into a most violent fever.

Mr. Keeper, who interested himself in my preservation, imagining that he could not do better than call physicians to my assistance, brought two to visit me, who, by their appearance, seemed zealous ministers of the goddess Libitina.* 'Signior Gil Blas,' said he, 'here are two Hippocrateses come to see you; they will set you a foot again in a little time.' I was so much prejudiced against all manner of physicians, that I should have certainly given them a very bad reception, had I been in the least desirous of living; but at that time I felt myself so much tired of life, that I was glad Tordesillas put me into their hands.

'Signior Cavalier,' said one of these doctors to me, 'in the first place, you must repose an entire confidence in our skill.' 'I have a most perfect dependance on it,' answered I: 'with your assistance, I am very sure that, in a few days, I shall be cured of all my distempers.' 'Yes,' he replied; 'with God's help, you shall: at least, we will do our endeavour for that purpose.' These gentlemen actually performed to a miracle, and put me into such a good way, that I was visibly posting to the other world. Don Andre, despairing of my recovery, had already sent for a Franciscan friar to prepare me for my end. The good father, having done his duty, had already retired; and I myself believing that my last hour approached, beckoned Scipio to the bed-side. 'My dear friend,' said I to him, with

* The goddess who presides over funerals.

a faint voice, so much was I enfeebled by the medicines I had taken, and the bleedings I had undergone; 'I leave to thee one of the bags which are at Gabriel's house, and conjure thee to carry the other into the Asturias, to my father and mother, who must have great occasion for it, if they be still alive. But, alas! I fear they could not bear up against my ingratitude: the report which, doubtless, Muscada made to them of my hard-heartedness, has, perhaps, occasioned their death. If heaven hath preserved them, in spite of the indifference with which I requited their affection, give them the bag of doubloons, and beg them, from me, to pardon my unnatural behaviour. If they are no more, I charge thee to employ the money in causing prayers to be put up for the repose of their souls and mine." So saying, I stretched out my hand, which he bathed with his tears, without being able to answer one word; so much was the poor young man afflicted at the prospect of losing me. This proves, that the tears of an heir are not always the tears of joy disguised.

I lay thus, in expectation of my exit; but I was balked. My doctors, having abandoned me, left the field free to nature. I was saved by their desertion. The fever, which, according to their prognostic, was to carry me off, quitted me immediately, as if it intended to give them the lie. I recovered gradually; and, by the greatest good luck in the world, a perfect tranquillity of mind was the fruit of my disease. I then had no need of consolation: I entertained for riches and honour all the contempt which the opinion of approaching death had made me conceive; and now restored, as it were, to myself, blessed my misfor-

time. I thanked heaven for it, as for a particular favour, and firmly resolved never to return to court, even if the Duke of Lerma should recall me. I proposed rather, if ever I should be released, to purchase a cottage, and live in it like a philosopher.

My confidant approved of my design; and told me, that in order to hasten the execution of it, he intended to go and solicit my enlargement at Madrid. 'There is a thing come into my head,' added he; 'I know a person who can serve you. She is the favourite waiting-woman of the prince's nurse, and a girl of understanding. I will make her apply to her mistress in your behalf; and will attempt every thing to get you out of this tower, which is still a prison, notwithstanding the good treatment you receive in it.' 'Thou art in the right,' answered I: 'go, my friend, and begin this negotiation without loss of time. Would to heaven we were already in our retreat!'

CHAPTER IX.

Scipio returns to Madrid, and procures the enlargement of Gil Blas, on certain conditions. What course they steer together, when they leave the tower of Segovia, and the conversation that passes between them.

Scipio set out once more for Madrid; and I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading, being furnished with more books than I

wanted by Tordesillas, who borrowed them from an old commander that could not read, though he had a fine library, to maintain the appearance of a literati. I loved, in particular, good books of morality, because I found in them every moment passages that flattered my aversion for the court, and my inclination for solitude.

I spent three weeks without hearing a syllable of my agent, who at length returned, and said to me, with a gay air, 'This time, Signior de Santillane, I bring good news; madam the nurse interests herself in your behalf. Her maid, at my entreaty, in consideration of a hundred pistoles that I have consigned to her, has been so generous as to engage her to beg your release of the Prince of Spain; and that prince, who, as I have already observed, can refuse her nothing, has promised to ask it of the king his father. I am come hither in a hurry to apprize you of it, and shall return immediately to put the finishing stroke to the work.' So saying, he left me, and went back to court.

His third trip was not of long duration. In eight days my man returned, and told me, that the prince had, not without difficulty, obtained my release. This piece of information was confirmed the same day by Mr. Keeper, who embraced me, saying, 'My dear Gil Blas! thank heaven, you are free! the gates of the prison are open to you; but, upon two conditions, which perhaps will give you a great deal of pain, and which I am obliged to inform you of, though not without regret. His majesty forbids you to appear at court, and orders you to quit the kingdom of Castile in a month. I am very much mortified that you are prohibited going to court.' 'And I

am overjoyed at it,' I replied: 'God knows what my opinion of it is. I expected but one favour from the king, and I have received two.'

Being assured that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired two mules, which my confidant and I mounted next day, after having bid adieu to Cogollos, and returned a thousand thanks to Tordesillas, for all the marks of friendship I had received at his hands. We set out merrily for Madrid, to retrieve, from the hands of Signior Gabriel, our two bags, in each of which were five hundred doubloons. My associate said to me by the way, 'If we are not rich enough to buy a magnificent estate, we can at least purchase a commodious one.' 'So we had but a hut,' answered I, 'I should be satisfied with my condition; for, though I am scarce in the middle of my career, I feel myself quite detached from the world, and intend for the future to live for myself only. Besides, I must tell thee, I have formed an enchanting idea of a country life, the pleasures of which I enjoy by anticipation. Methinks I already behold the enamelled meads, hear the nightingales sing, and the brooks murmur. Sometimes I divert myself in hunting, and sometimes in fishing. Imagine to thyself, my friend, all the different pleasures that await us in solitude, and thou wilt be as much charmed with it as I am. With regard to eating, the most simple nourishment is best. A morsel of bread may satisfy us when we are hungry, and the appetite with which we eat it, will make us think it excellent food. The pleasure does not consist in the quality of exquisite dishes, but centres wholly in ourselves; and this is so true, that the most delicious of my meals are not those in which the greatest

delicacy and abundance reign. Frugality is a source of delights, and wonderfully conducive to health.'

'By your leave, Signior Gil Blas,' said my secretary, interrupting me; 'I am not altogether of your opinion with regard to the pretended frugality you praise so much. Why should we live like Diogenes? If we indulge our appetites a little, we shall not be a bit the worse for it. Take my advice; and since we have, thank God, wherewithal to render our retreat agreeable, let us not make it the habitation of hunger and poverty. As soon as we shall have got possession of our land, we shall fortify our house with good wines, and all other provisions suitable to people of taste, who did not quit the commerce of mankind with a view of renouncing the conveniences of life, but rather to enjoy them with more tranquillity. "That which a man has in his house," says Hesiod, "never hurts him: whereas that which he has not may. It is better," adds the same author, "for a man to have all things necessary in his possession, than in his wish only."'

'How the devil, Mr. Scipio!' cried I, 'come you to know the Greek poets? Ha! where did you pick up acquaintance with Hesiod?' 'In the house of a learned man,' he replied: 'I served a pedant of Salamanca some time. He was a great commentator, and would toss you up a large volume in a twinkling, composed of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin quotations, taken from books in his library, and translated into the Castilian tongue. As I was his amanuensis, I retained in my memory a great number of sentences as remarkable as that which I repeated.' 'If that be the case,' said I, 'your memory is well garnished.

But, to return to our scheme; in what kingdom of Spain do you think we should establish our philosophical residence?' 'I vote for Arragon, replied my confidant; 'we will there find charming spots, where we may lead a delicious life.' 'Well,' said I, 'be it so. Let us fix in Arragon. I consent to the proposal; and I wish we may there find a place of abode that will afford all those pleasures with which I feast my imagination.'

CHAPTER X.

Their behaviour at Madrid. Gil Blas meets a certain person in the street. The consequence of that meeting.

When we arrived at Madrid, we alighted at a small house, where Scipio had lodged in his expeditions; and the first thing we did was to repair to Salero, in order to retrieve our doubloons. He gave us a very civil reception, and expressed a good deal of joy in seeing me at liberty. 'I protest to you,' said he, 'I was so much affected with your misfortune, that I conceived a disgust at all alliances with courtiers, their fortunes are so uncertain; and therefore gave my daughter Gabriela in marriage to a wealthy merchant.' 'You were in the right,' answered I, 'for, besides that this match is more solid, a citizen who marries his daughter to a man of quality, has not always reason to be satisfied with Monsieur his son-in-law.'

Then shifting the subject, and coming to the

purpose: 'Signior Gabriel,' said I, 'be so good, if you please, as to deliver the two thousand pistoles, which—' 'Your money is ready for you,' said the goldsmith, interrupting me; and conducting us into his closet, showed us the two bags, with notes upon them, containing these words: 'These bags of doubloons belong to Signior Gil Blas de Santillane.' 'There they are,' said he, 'just as they were committed to my care.'

I thanked Salero for the service he had done me; and, very well consoled for the loss of his daughter, carried the bags home, where we began to examine our double pistoles. The tale was just, after having deducted about fifty which had been employed to procure my enlargement. Our sole study now was, to put ourselves in a condition to depart for Arragon. My secretary undertook to buy a chaise and two mules, and I provided ourselves with clothes and linen. While I was going from one place to another in the streets, bargaining for what I wanted, I met Baron Steinbach, that officer of the German guards in whose house Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I saluted that cavalier, who, knowing me also, came and embraced me with great affection. 'I am extremely glad,' said I to him, 'to see your lordship in such good health, and to find at the same time an opportunity of hearing of Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva.' 'I can give you a certain account of them both,' answered he; 'for they are now actually at Madrid, and lodge in my house. About three months ago they came to town to thank his majesty for a post which Don Alphonso has received in consideration of the services which his ancestors had done

the state. He is made governor of the city of Valencia, without having asked the place, or even desired any body to solicit for him. Nothing can be more generous; and this shows that our monarch delights in recompensing valour.'

Though I knew much better than Baron de Steinbach what the true motive was, I did not seem to know any thing of the matter; but expressed such a vehement desire to salute my old masters, that, in order to satisfy me, he carried me home with him immediately. I was curious to try Don Alphonso, and judge, by the reception I should meet with from him, whether or no he had any remains of affection for me. I found him in a hall, playing at chess with the baroness; and as soon as he perceived me, he quitted the game, got up, and advancing towards me with transport, pressed my head with his arms, saying, with marks of real joy, 'Santillane, have I found you again! I am overjoyed at meeting with you! It was not my fault that ever we parted; for I desired you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva. You had no regard to my request; but I am far from being angry with you on that account. I am even beholden to you, for the motive of your retreat: but since that time, you ought to have let me heard from you, and spared me the trouble of sending in vain to find you at Grenada, where Don Fernando, my brother-in-law, wrote me you was.'

After this gentle reproach, he continued, 'Tell me what your business is at Madrid. You have, I suppose, some employment here! Be assured, that I share as much as ever in what concerns you.' 'Signior,' answered I, 'something less than four months ago, I filled a pretty considerable

post at court, having had the honour to be secretary and confidant to the Duke of Lerma.' 'Is it possible!' cried Don Alphonso, with extreme astonishment; 'what! was you in the confidence of the prime-minister?" 'I gained his favour,' said I, 'and lost it in the manner you shall hear.' I then recounted the whole story, and ended my relation with the resolution I had taken to buy, with the slender remains of my past prosperity, a cottage, in which I proposed to lead a retired life. The son of Don Cæsar having listened very attentively, replied, 'My dear Gil Blas, you know I always loved you. You shall be the sport of fortune no more. I will deliver you from her power, by making you master of an estate, which she cannot deprive you of. Since you design to live in the country, I bestow upon you a small farm which we have hard by Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia. You know the place; and it is a present which we are in a condition of making, without incommoding ourselves in the least. I dare answer for my father's consent, and I know that it will give great pleasure to Serephina.'

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who immediately raised me up. I kissed his hand, and more charmed with the goodness of his heart, than the value of his favour, 'Signior,' said I, 'your behaviour enchants me. The present which you make is the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a piece of service which I did you; and I would rather owe it to your generosity than to your acknowledgment.' My governor was a little surprised at my discourse, and did not fail to ask what this pre-

tended service was. I told him; and the information redoubled his surprise. He, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, was far from thinking that the government of the city of Valencia had been bestowed upon him by my interest. Nevertheless, as he could not doubt my veracity, 'Gil Blas,' said he, 'since I owe my post to you, I don't intend to confine my gratuity to the little farm of Lirias; I will give you along with it two thousand ducats yearly.'

'Halt there, Signior Alphonso,' said I, interrupting him; 'don't awake my avarice. I have too well experienced, that riches serve only to corrupt my morals. I accept, with all my heart, your farm of Lirias, where I will live comfortably with the money which I have already in my possession. But that is sufficient; and, far from desiring more, I would rather consent to lose the superfluity of what I possess. Riches are a burden to one in retirement, who seeks only to enjoy quiet.'

While we conversed in this manner, Don Cæsar coming in, expressed as much joy at seeing me as his son had done before; and when he understood the obligation which his family lay under to me, he pressed me to accept the annuity, which I again refused. In short, the father and son carried me instantly to a notary's house, where they caused a deed of gift to be made out, and signed it with more pleasure than they would have felt in signing a deed to their own advantage. When it was executed, they put it into my hand, saying, the farm of Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go and take possession of it when I would. They then went back to

the house of Baron de Steinbach, and I flew to our lodgings, where my secretary was ravished with admiration, when I informed him that we had an estate in Valencia, and recounted in what manner I had made this acquisition. 'How much,' said he, 'may this small dominion be worth?' 'Five hundred ducats per annum,' I replied: 'and I can assure thee, it is a lovely solitude, which I know perfectly well; having been there several times in quality of steward to the Lords of Leyva. It is a small house on the borders of the Guadalaviar, in a hamlet of five or six houses, and in the midst of a charming country.'

'What pleases me still more in it,' cried Scipio, 'is, that we shall have fine venison, with wine of Bernicarlo, and excellent Muscadine. Come, master, let us make haste to quit the world, and gain our hermitage.' 'I long as much as thou dost to be there,' I replied; 'but I must first make a tour to the Asturias. My parents are there in no very agreeable situation; and I intend to conduct them to Lirias, where they will pass the remainder of their days in quiet. Heaven, perhaps, has granted me this asylum on purpose to receive them, and would punish me if I failed in my duty.' Scipio approved very much of my design, and even excited me to put it in execution. 'Let us lose no time,' said he; 'I have already secured a chaise, let us buy mules immediately, and set out for Oviedo.' 'Yes, my friend,' I replied; 'let us depart as soon as we can. I think it my indispensable duty to share the sweets of my retirement with the authors of my being. Our journey will not be long. We shall soon see ourselves settled

in our hamlet; where, when we arrive, I will write over the door of my house these two Latin verses in letters of gold:

'Inveni portum! Spes et fortuna valete!
'Sat me lusistis, ludite nunc alios.'

END OF VOL. III.

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS,

OF SANTILLANE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF MONSIEUR LE SAGE,

BY

TOBIAS SMOLLETT, M.D.,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK XII.

CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas sets out for the Asturias, passes through Valladolid, where he visits his old master, Doctor Sangrado; and meets by accident with Signior Manuel Ordonnez, director of the hospital.

WHILE I was getting ready for my departure from Madrid, with Scipio, on my journey to the Asturias, Pope Paul the Fifth named the Duke of Lerma to the cardinalship. This pope being desirous of establishing the inquisition in the kingdom of Naples, invested that minister with the purple, that he might engage him to make King Philip consent to such a laudable design. All those who were well acquainted with this new member of the Sacred College thought, like me, that the church had made a fine acquisition.

Scipio, who would rather have seen me in a brilliant post at court, than buried in solitude, advised me to present myself before the cardinal. 'Perhaps,' said he, 'his eminence, seeing you out of prison by the king's order, will think it unnecessary to appear any longer irritated against you, and take you into his service again.' 'Mr. Scipio,' answered I, 'you seem to have forgot

that I obtained my liberty on condition I should quit the Two Castiles immediately. Besides, do you think me already disgusted with my castle of Lirias? I have told you once, and now repeat it, that if the Duke of Lerma would restore me to his good graces, and even offer me the place of Don Roderigo de Calderona, I would refuse it. My resolution is taken, I will go in quest of my parents at Oviedo, and retire with them to Valencia. As for thee, my friend, if thou repentest of having joined thy fortune to mine, speak; I am ready to give thee one-half of my money, and thou mayest stay at Madrid, and push thy fortune as far as it will go.'

'How!' replied my secretary, nettled at my words; 'can you suspect me of having any repugnance to follow you to your retreat? my zeal and attachment are injured by your suspicion. What! Scipio, that faithful servant! who, to share your affliction, would have willingly passed the remainder of his days with you in the tower of Segovia! shall he feel any regret in accompanying you to an abode that promises him a thousand pleasures? No, no; I have no desire of dissuading you from your resolution. I must own, I was a little mischievous, when I advised you to show yourself to the Duke of Lerma: I wanted to sound you, that I might know if some seeds of ambition did not still remain in your breast. Well, then; since you are so much detached from pomp and grandeur, let us abandon the court immediately, and go and enjoy those innocent and delicious pleasures, of which we have formed such charming ideas.' We actually set out in a few days, mounted together in a chaise drawn by two good mules, and conducted by a young man, with

whom I thought proper to augment my train. We lay the first night at Alcala de Henares, and the second at Segovia; from whence (without staying to visit the generous Keeper Tordesillas) we got to Penafiel on the Duero, and next day to Valladolid.* At sight of this last place, I could not help heaving a profound sigh; and my companion, who perceived it, asking the cause, 'Child,' said I, 'I practised physic a long time in this city; and my conscience upbraids me with it this moment! methinks all the sick people whom I killed come out of their tombs, and seem ready to tear me in pieces.' 'What a fancy is this!' said my secretary: 'truly, Signior de Santillane, you are too good. Why should you repent of having laboured in your vocation? Observe the oldest physicians; do they feel any such remorse? No, sure: they still go in their old course, with the utmost tranquillity, throwing the blame of all fatal accidents on Nature, and claiming honour from every lucky event.'

'True,' said I; 'Dr. Sangrado, whose method I faithfully followed, was a man of that character. Though he saw twenty people die daily upon his hands, he was so well convinced of the excellence of bleeding in the arm, and plentiful draughts of warm water, which he called his two specifics in all kinds of distempers, that, instead of suspecting his remedies, he believed that his patients died

* Valladolid, an ancient city of Old Castile, in Spain, on the banks of the Pisuerga, in a most delightful situation, on a fertile plain. The inhabitants make up about four thousand families, among whom is a great number of nobility and gentry: it is the see of a bishop, has a university, and a considerable trade. Among other stately buildings, the great piazza is one of the noblest, being the model of that of Madrid, consisting of five hundred arches with gilded balconies. This city is walled, but not a place of strength. Here are about seventy convents of both sexes.

because they had not drank and been blooded enough.' 'Egad!' cried Scipio, bursting into a loud laugh; 'this must be an incomparable person!' 'If thou hast any curiosity to see and hear him,' said I, 'thou mayest satisfy it to-morrow morning; provided Sangrado be still alive, and at Valladolid; which I can scarce believe, for he was very old when I left him, and that happened a good many years ago.'

Our first care, when we arrived at our inn, was to inquire about that doctor, whom we learned was not yet dead; but being too old to visit patients, or move about, he had given place to three or four doctors, who had acquired reputation by a new method of practice, which did not succeed a whit better than his. We resolved to stay all next day at Valladolid, as well to rest our horses, as to visit Signior Sangrado, to whose house we repaired about ten o'clock in the morning, and found him sitting in an easy chair, with a book in his hand. As soon as he perceived us, he got up, and coming towards me, with a firm step, considering his age, which was seventy, asked our business with him. 'Mr. Doctor,' said I to him, 'don't you recollect me? I have the honour to be one of your disciples. Don't you remember a young man called Gil Blas, who formerly lived in your house, and was your deputy?' 'What! is it you, Santillane!' answered he, embracing me; 'I should not have known you again. I am very glad to see you. What have you been doing since you left me? You have, doubtless, practised physic all along?' 'I was, indeed,' said I, 'sufficiently inclined to that profession, which, however, some strong reasons have hindered me from exercising.'

'So much the worse,' replied Sangrado. 'With the principles which you imbibed from me, you would have become an expert physician, provided heaven had given you grace to preserve yourself from the dangerous love of chemistry. Ah, my son!' continued he, with an air of sorrow: 'what a change has happened in physic within these few years! That art is robbed of all its honour and dignity: that art, which in all times hath regarded the life of a man, is now a prey to rashness, presumption, and *empirics;* for their actions speak; and, in a little time, the very stones will cry aloud against the cabals of these new practitioners. *Lapides clamabunt!* There are in this city physicians (or such as call themselves so) who are yoked to the triumphal car of antimony. *Currus triumphalis antimonii.* Truants from the school of Paracelsus; adorers of kermes, accidental curers, who make the whole science of medicine consist in knowing how to prepare chemical drugs. What shall I tell you! every thing is turned topsy turvy in their method. Bleeding at the foot, for example, hitherto so seldom practised, is now almost the only evacuation in use. Those purgatives which were formerly gentle and benign, are now changed for emetics and kermes. The whole is a mere chaos, where each does what he thinks proper; transgressing those bounds of order and sagacity, which our ancient masters had so wisely prescribed.'

Whatever inclination I had to laugh at such a comical declamation, I had power to resist it. I did more: I exclaimed against kermes, without knowing what it was, and at a venture wished those who invented it at the devil. Scipio, observing that I made myself merry with this scene,

had a mind to act in it also. 'Mr. Doctor,' said he to Sangrado, 'as I am grand-nephew to a physician of the old school, give me leave to revolt with you against chemical medicines. My late grand-uncle (rest his soul!) was such a warm partizan of Hippocrates, that he often battled with quacks who spoke disrespectfully of that prince of physic. True blood will always show itself; I would willingly perform the office of executioner to those ignorant innovators of whom you complain with such eloquence and justice. What disorder must these wretches create in civil society!'

'That disorder,' replied the doctor, 'is more extensive than you imagine. My having published a book against the robbers of medicine, was of no use: on the contrary, the mischief daily increases. The surgeons, mad with the ambition of acting as physicians, think themselves sufficiently qualified, when there is nothing to be done but to give kermes and emetics, to which they add blooding at the foot, according to their own fancy. They even proceed so far, as to mix kermes in apozems and cordial potions; and so they are on a par with your celebrated prescribers. This contagion has spread also among the cloysters There are some monks who act both as apothecaries and surgeons. Those apes of medicine apply themselves to chemistry, and compose pernicious drugs, with which they abridge the lives of their reverend fathers. In fine, there are more than sixty monasteries of men and women in Valladolid; so you may judge what ravage is made in them, by kermes united with emetics, and blooding in the foot.' 'Signior Sangrado,' said I, 'you have reason to be incensed against

these poisoners. I groan in concert with you, and share your alarms for the lives of mankind, which are so manifestly threatened by a method so different from yours. I am very much afraid that chemistry will one day occasion the total ruin of physic; in the same manner as false money proves destructive to kingdoms. Heaven grant that the fatal day be not too near.'

At this part of our conversation, an old maid-servant brought in for the doctor a little light bread on a salver, and a glass, with two bottles, one of which was filled with water, and the other with wine. After he had eaten a morsel of the bread, he took a draught of liquor, in which indeed there were two-thirds of water; but that did not save him from the reproach which he gave me a handle to vent against him. 'Ah, ha!' said I, 'Mr. Doctor, have I caught you in the fact? you drink wine then! you who have always declared against that liquor; you who, during three-fourths of your life, have drank nothing but water! How long have you acted so inconsistent with yourself? You can't excuse yourself on account of your age; since, in one part of your writings, you define old age a natural decay that withers and consumes us; and, in consequence of that definition, deplore the ignorance of those people who stile wine the milk of old men. What, therefore, can you say in your own justification?"

'You declare war against me very unjustly,' replied the old physician. 'Had I drank pure wine, you would have had some reason to look upon me as an unfaithful observer of my own method; but you see that my wine is very much diluted.' 'Another inconsistency, my dear master,' said I; 'don't you remember that you blamed

the Canon Sedillo for drinking wine, although it was mixed with a great deal of water? Confess freely, that you are sensible of your error; and that wine is not a fatal liquor, as you advanced in your works, provided it be drank with moderation.'

These words perplexed the doctor, who could not deny that he had forbid the use of wine in his books; but shame and vanity hindered him from owning that my reproach was just, and he did not know what answer to make. To extricate him out of this dilemma, I shifted the discourse; and in a moment after took leave of him, exhorting him to keep his ground still against the new practitioners. 'Courage, Signior Sangrado!' said I to him; 'be indefatigable in decrying kermes, and combat against blooding in the foot without ceasing. If, in spite of your zeal and physical orthodoxy, that empirical race should succeed in ruining true discipline, you will at least enjoy the consolation of having done your utmost to maintain it.'

As my secretary and I returned to the inn, conversing together about the diverting and original character of the doctor, a man of about five and fifty or sixty years of age passed us in the street, walking with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. I viewed him attentively, and easily recollected him to be Signior Manuel Ordonnez, that pious director of the hospital, of whom such honourable mention is made in the first volume of my memoirs. I accosted him with great demonstrations of respect, saying, 'Health to the venerable and discreet Signior Manuel Ordonnez! the most proper man in the world to manage the poor's money.' At these words he eyed me narrowly, and answered, that he remembered

my features, but could not recollect the place where he had seen me. 'I was often at your house,' said I, 'while you had in your service a friend of mine called Fabricio Nunnez.' 'Ah, I remember you now;' answered the director, with a satirical smile, 'by this token, that you were both arch lads, and played together many tricks of youth. Well! what is become of poor Fabricio? every time I think of him, I am uneasy about his circumstances.'

'My motive,' said I, 'for taking the liberty of stopping you in the street, was to give you an account of him. Fabricio is at Madrid, employed in composing miscellanies.' 'What do you call miscellanies?' answered he. 'That is,' said I, 'he writes in prose and verse. He composes comedies and romances; in a word, he is a young fellow of genius, and is very well received in the best families.' 'But,' said the director, 'how stands he with his baker?' 'Not quite so well,' answered I, 'as with people of fashion: between you and me, I believe he is as poor as Job.' 'Oh! I don't at all doubt it,' cried Ordonnez. 'Let him make his court to noblemen as much as he pleases; his complaisance, flattery, and cringing, will bring still less into his pocket than his works. Remember I prophesy, that you will one day see him in the hospital.'

'That may very well be,' I replied. 'Poetry has brought many a one to that catastrophe. My friend Fabricio would have done much better had he remained with your worship. He would by this time have rolled upon gold.' 'At least, he would have been in very easy circumstances,' said Manuel. 'I had a regard for him; and would have, by raising him from post to post, procured a solid

settlement for him in the hospital, had he not been whimsical enough to set up for a wit. He composed a comedy, which was acted by the players of this city: the piece succeeded, and from that moment his head turned. He believed himself another Lope de Vega; and preferring the smoke of public applause to the real advantages which my friendship prepared for him, demanded his dismission. I remonstrated in vain, that he was going to quit the substance, and run after the shadow. I could not detain this madman, who was actuated with the fury of writing. He did not know his own interest,' added he. 'The young man who succeeded him in my service is a living proof of this. Having more judgment, and less understanding than Fabricio, he applied himself wholly to the execution of his commission, and studied to please me. Accordingly, I have promoted him as he deserved, and he now actually enjoys two employments at the hospital, the least of which is more than sufficient to maintain an honest man encumbered with a large family.'

CHAPTER II.

Gil Blas continues his journey, and arrives safely at Oviedo. The condition in which he found his parents. The death of his father, and the consequences thereof.

From Valladolid we got in four days to Oviedo, without meeting with any bad accident on the road, notwithstanding the proverb, which says

'That robbers smell the money of travellers afar off.' We should have been, however, a pretty good booty; and two inhabitants of the cavern would have been sufficient to carry off our doubloons with ease; for I had not learned to grow valiant at court; and Bertrand, my *moco de mulas*,* did not seem of a humour to die in defence of his master's purse: Scipio was the only Hector among us.

It being night when we arrived in town, we went to lodge at an inn hard by the house of my uncle the Canon Gil Perez. I was willing to understand the situation of my parents before I should appear as their son; and, for this piece of information, I could not apply to a more proper person than my landlord or his wife, who I knew to be people who were very well acquainted with the affairs of their neighbours. In effect, the landlord, after having eyed me with attention, recollecting my face, cried, 'By St. Antonio de Padua! this is the son of honest Usher Blas of Santillane.' 'Yes, truly,' said his wife, 'it is he indeed! he is very little altered: it is the same little brisk Gil Blas, who had always more spirit in his heart than beef on his bones. I think I see him still coming to this house with his bottle, for wine to his uncle's supper.'

'Madam,' said I, 'you have a very happy memory: but, pray tell me news of my family; my father and mother are doubtless in no very agreeable situation.' 'That is but too true,' replied the landlady: 'how bad soever you may think their condition is, you cannot conceive them more distressed than they are. Gil Perez, honest man, has lost the use of one half of his body by the palsy, and in all appearance cannot last long: your father, who has lived of late with the canon, has got a

* A mule-driver.

defluxion in his breast, or rather is at this moment in the agonies of death; and your mother, though far from being well, is obliged to serve as a nurse to both.'

On this report, which made me feel that I was a son, I left Bertrand with my equipage at the inn; and attended by my secretary, who would not quit me, repaired to my uncle's house. As soon as I appeared before my mother, an emotion which I caused in her, signified my presence before her eyes had distinguished my features. 'Son,' said she, with a melancholy air, after she had embraced me, 'come and see your father breathe his last: you are come time enough to be struck with that cruel spectacle.' So saying, she carried me into a chamber where the unfortunate Blas of Santillane, lying on a bed that too well denoted the poverty of an usher, drew near his exit. Though he was environed by the shades of death, his senses had not quite forsaken him. 'My dear friend,' said my mother to him. 'here is your son Gil Blas, who begs your forgiveness for the sorrows he has occasioned, and asks your blessing.' At these words, my father, opening his eyes, which death had begun to close, fixed them upon me; and observing, in spite of his own lamentable condition, that I was very much affected with the loss of him, seemed moved at my grief, and attempted to speak, but had not strength enough to utter one word. I took hold of one of his hands; and while I bathed it with my tears, unable to pronounce a syllable, he expired, as if he had waited for my arrival before he would breathe his last.

My mother was too well prepared for his death to be immoderately afflicted at it, and I was perhaps more grieved than she, although my father

had never given me the least mark of friendship in his life. My being his son was a sufficient cause for me to lament him; besides, I upbraided myself for not having assisted him in his distress; and when I reflected on my hard-heartedness, looked upon myself as a monster of ingratitude, or rather as a downright parricide. My uncle, whom I afterwards beheld stretched on a truckle-bed, and in a miserable condition, made me feel fresh remorse. 'Unnatural son!' said I to myself, 'contemplate, for thy punishment, the misery of thy parents. If thou hadst given them a small share of the superfluity which was in thy possession before thou wast imprisoned, they would have enjoyed conveniences which the revenue of the prebend could not afford; and, perhaps, thou wouldst have prolonged the life of thy father!'

The unfortunate Gil Perez was become a child again, having lost both his memory and judgment. In vain did I press him in my arms, with marks of real affection; he seemed insensible of what I did. When my mother told him that I was his nephew Gil Blas, he looked at me with an unmeaning eye, and made no answer. Though blood and gratitude had not obliged me to lament an uncle to whom I owed so much, I could not have beheld him in a condition so worthy of pity without feeling the emotions of compassion.

All this time Scipio remained in a melancholy silence, partook of my affliction, and, through friendship, mingled his sighs with mine. As I concluded that my mother, after such a long absence, wanted to converse with me, and that she might be uneasy at the presence of a man whom she did not know, I took him aside, and said, 'Go, my child; go, and repose thyself at the inn; and leave me here with

my mother, who perhaps will think thee one too many in a conversation that will wholly turn on family affairs.' Scipio, rather than put us under any restraint, retired; and I actually discoursed with my mother the best part of the night. We gave one another a faithful account of what had happened to us since my departure from Oviedo: she was minute in the detail of those mortifications she had suffered in the families where she had been duenna, and told me an infinite number of things on that subject which I was glad my secretary did not hear, though he was intrusted with all my secrets. With all the respect that I owe to the memory of a mother, I must own that the good lady was a little prolix in her narrations; and she would have spared me three-fourths of her history had she suppressed all the trivial circumstances of it: she concluded at length, and I began mine. I passed lightly over all my adventures; but when I came to the visit which I received at Madrid from the son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer of Oviedo, I enlarged upon that article. 'I own,' said I to my mother, 'I gave that young man a very bad reception; who, to be revenged, has doubtless drawn a very frightful picture of me.' 'In that he did not fail,' answered she; 'he told us that he found you so proud of the favour of the prime-minister, that you scarce deigned to recollect him; and, when he described our distress, heard him with the utmost indifference. As parents,' added she, 'always endeavour to find excuses for the behaviour of their children, we would not believe that you had such a bad heart. Your arrival at Oviedo justifies our good opinion of you, and your present sorrow confirms your apology.'

'You judge too favourably of me,' I replied;

'there is a great deal of truth in young Muscada's report. When he visited me, I was wholly engrossed by the care of making my fortune; and the ambition that possessed me would not permit me to think of my parents. It must not therefore be wondered at, if, in this disposition, I gave an unwelcome reception to a man who, accosting me rudely, told me in a brutal manner, that, hearing I was richer than a Jew, he came to advise me to send you some money, of which you stood in great need: he even reproached my indifference for my family in very indecent terms. I was shocked at his freedom; and, losing patience, pushed him by the shoulders out of my closet. I own I was to blame in this rencounter: I ought to have reflected, that it was not your fault if the grocer wanted manners, and that his advice was never the worse for its being brutally delivered.

'This was what I represented to myself immediately after I had sent Muscada about his business. My blood spoke in your behalf; I recalled all my duty to my parents; and, blushing for shame for having performed it so ill, felt remorse, which nevertheless can do me no honour with you, because it was soon stifled by avarice and ambition: but having been afterwards imprisoned, by the king's order in the tower of Segovia, I fell dangerously ill, and that happy distemper hath restored your son to you: yes, it was my disease and imprisonment that made nature resume all her rights, and entirely detached me from court. I now thirst after solitude; and my sole motive for coming to the Asturias was to entreat you to share with me the sweets of a retired life. If you don't refuse my request, I will conduct you to an estate which I have in the kingdom of Valencia, where we shall

live at our ease. You may believe I intended to carry my father thither also; but since heaven hath ordained it otherwise, let me have the satisfaction of enjoying my mother's company, and of making amends to her for my past neglect by all imaginable care.' 'I am very much obliged to your laudable intention,' said my mother; 'and would go without hesitation, if I saw no objections in the case; but I will not leave my brother (your uncle) in this deplorable condition; and I am so much used to this country, that I cannot now quit it. However, as the thing deserves due consideration, I will think of it at leisure: let us at present take care of your father's funeral.' 'That,' said I, 'shall be ordered by the young man whom you saw along with me; he is my secretary, and has such zeal and understanding, that we may depend upon his care.'

Scarce had I pronounced these words, when Scipio returned, it being already day; and asking if we had any occasion for his service in our perplexity, I told him that he came very seasonably to receive an important order which I had to give. When he knew what the business was, 'Enough,' said he; 'I have already contrived the whole ceremony, and you may trust to my discretion.' 'Beware,' said my mother, 'of making a pompous burial: it cannot be too modest for my husband, whom all the town knew to be a very indigent usher.' 'Madam,' replied Scipio, 'had he been still more needy than he was, I would not abate two farthings of the expense: for in this I regard my master only; he has been the Duke of Lerma's favourite, and his father ought to be nobly interred.'

I approved of my secretary's design, and even desired him to spare no cost: the remains of vanity

which I still preserved, broke out on this occasion: I flattered myself, that in being at a great expense upon a father, who left me no inheritance, I should make the world admire my generous behaviour. My mother, for her part, whatever modesty she affected, was not ill pleased to see her husband buried in splendour. We therefore gave a *charte blanche* to Scipio; who, without loss of time, took all necessary measures for a superb funeral.

He succeeded but too well; and performed such magnificent obsequies, that he brought the whole city and suburbs on my back; all the inhabitants of Oviedo, from the highest to the lowest, being shocked at my ostentation. 'This minister,' said one, 'is in a great hurry to lay out money on his father's interment; but he was in none to maintain him.' 'He would have done better,' said another, 'had he succoured his father while he was alive, than to honour him so much, now he is dead.' In short, reproaches were not spared; every one had a fling at me: but they did not stop here; they insulted Scipio, Bertrand, and me, as we came out of the church, loaded us with revilings, and hooted us as we walked along, and conducted Bertrand to the inn with a shower of stones.

To disperse the mob that was gathered before my uncle's house, there was a necessity for my mother's showing herself, and declaring, that she was perfectly well satisfied with my conduct. Some ran to the public-house, in order to demolish my chaise; and this they certainly would have done, if the landlord and his wife had not found means to appease their fury, and dissuade them from their design.

All these affronts, which were the effects of the young grocer's report of me through the city, in-

spired me with such aversion for my townsmen, that I determined speedily to leave Oviedo, where, otherwise, I should perhaps have staid a good while. This I plainly told my mother, who, being very much mortified at the reception with which the people had regaled me, did not oppose my departure. What remained now, was to know how I should dispose of her. 'Mother,' said I, 'since my uncle wants your assistance, I will not press you to go along with me at present; but as, in all appearance, he has not long to live, you must promise to come to my estate immediately after his decease.'

'I will make no such promise,' answered my mother; 'being resolved to pass the rest of my days in the Asturias, in perfect independence.' 'Will not you always,' said I, 'be mistress in my house?' 'I don't know that,' she resumed: 'you may fall in love with some young girl, and marry her; then I shall be her mother-in-law; consequently we cannot live together.' 'You foresee misfortune,' said I, 'at too great a distance: I have no intention to marry; but if the fancy should strike me, depend upon it, I will oblige my wife to be implicitly submissive to your will.' 'That is promising too much,' resumed my mother: 'I should want security for my bondsman; and would not even swear, that, in our disputes, you would not take the part of your wife rather than mine, how far soever she might be in the wrong.'

'You talk reasonably, madam,' cried my secretary, joining in the conversation; 'I am of your opinion, that submissive daughters-in-law are very rare. In the mean time, to accommodate matters between you and my master, since you are absolutely resolved to live in the Asturias, and

he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must grant you an allowance of one hundred pistoles, which I shall bring hither every year. By these means, the mother and son will live very happy at the distance of two hundred leagues from one another.' The parties concerned approved of the proposal: I paid the first year's annuity per advance, and quitted Oviedo next morning before break of day, that I might not be treated by the populace like another St. Stephen. Such was the reception I met with in my own country. An excellent lesson for those people of the common rank, who, after having got a fortune abroad, return to the place of their nativity, and affect the gentleman of importance.

CHAPTER III.

Gil Blas departs for the kingdom of Valencia, and at length arrives at Lirias. A description of his house. His reception; with an account of the people he found there.

We took the road to Leon, then to Valencia; and, continuing our journey, by short stages, in ten days arrived at the city of Segorba; from whence, next morning, we repaired to my estate, which is but three leagues distant from it. As we drew near this place, my secretary observed, with great attention, all the country-seats that presented themselves to his view, on the right and

left; and when he perceived one of a grand appearance, he always pointed to it with his finger, and said, 'I wish that was our retreat.' 'I don't know, friend,' said I to him, 'what idea thou hast formed of our habitation; but, if you imagine that it is a magnificent house, like that on some great nobleman's estate, I tell you, beforehand, that you are furiously mistaken. If thou hast not a mind to be the dupe of thy own imagination, represent to thyself the small house which Horace enjoyed in the country of the Sabines, near the Tyber, and which he received in a present from Mæcenas.' 'Then I must expect to see a cottage!' cried Scipio. 'Remember,' I replied, 'that I have already given you a very modest description of it; and this moment thou mayest thyself judge whether or not I am a faithful painter. Cast thy eyes towards the Guadalaviar, and observe on its banks, hard by that small hamlet, the house consisting of four little pavilions; that is my castle.' 'How the devil!' said my secretary, with surprise: 'that house is a perfect jewel! Besides the noble air that these pavilions give it, it is extremely well built, and surrounded by a more charming country than even the neighbourhood of Seville, which is called, by way of excellence, The Terrestrial Paradise. Had we chosen our abode, it could not have been more to my taste; a river waters it with its stream, and a thick wood lends its shade, when we are inclined to walk in the middle of the day. What an amiable solitude this is! Ah, my dear master! in all appearance, we shall not quit this place in a hurry.' 'I am overjoyed,' answered I, 'that thou art so well satisfied with our asylum, which is more agreeable still than you imagine.' Conversing in this man-

ner, we approached the house; the gate of which was thrown open, as soon as Scipio signified that it was Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, who came to take possession of his castle. At that name, so respected by those who heard it pronounced, my chaise was admitted into a large court, where I alighted: then leaning on Scipio, and taking state upon myself, I went into a hall, where I was scarce arrived, when seven or eight servants appeared. They said they came to present their homage to their new master; that Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had chosen them for my service; one in quality of cook, another as cook's assistant, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as lacquies; with orders to receive no money from me; these two noblemen intending to defray all the expenses of my housekeeping. Master Joachim, the cook, who was the principal, and spokesman of these domestics, gave me to understand, that he had laid in a large stock of the best wines in Spain; and told me, that as to eating, he hoped a young fellow, like him, who had been cook six years to the Archbishop of Valencia, must know how to compose ragouts that would tickle my palate. 'I will,' added he, 'fall presently to work, and produce a sample of my skill. Take a walk, signior, while dinner is getting ready; visit your castle, and see if it be in a habitable condition.'

I leave the reader to judge whether or not I neglected this visit; and Scipio, still more curious than I, dragged me from room to room. We surveyed the whole house from top to bottom; the least corner (as we imagined) did not escape our interested curiosity; and I had every where occasion to admire the bounty of Don Cæsar and his

son. Among other things, I was struck with the appearance of two apartments, which were as well furnished as they possibly could be without magnificence; one of them was hung with Arras tapestry, and had in it a bed and chairs of velvet, still very handsome, though made while the Moors possessed the kingdom of Valencia. The furniture of the other was in the same taste, consisting of hangings made of old yellow Genoa damask, with a bed and elbow-chairs of the same stuff, adorned with fringes of blue silk. All these effects, which would have been little valued in an inventory, appeared there very considerable. After having thoroughly examined every thing, my secretary and I returned to the hall, where the cloth was laid with two covers. We sat down at table, and in a moment was brought in an *olla podrida*, so delicious, that we pitied the Archbishop of Valencia for having lost the cook that composed it. At every morsel we eat, my new lacquies presented to us large glasses filled to the brims with wine of a most exquisite relish. Scipio, not daring to show before them the inward satisfaction that he felt, expressed himself to me by eloquent looks; and I gave him to understand, by the same language, that I was as well satisfied as he. A dish of roast meat, composed of two fat quails, which flanked a leveret of an admirable *fumet*, made us quit the olio, and finish our repast. When we had eaten like two gormandizers, and drank in proportion, we got up from table, and walked into the garden, to enjoy a voluptuous *siesta*,* in some cool agreeable place.

* Siesta, literally signifies the heat of the day, from noon forwards; but is here used to express the afternoon's nap, enjoyed every day by the inhabitants of hot climates.

If my secretary seemed hitherto satisfied with what he had seen, he was still more so, when he beheld the garden, which he thought comparable even to that of the Escurial. It is true, Don Cæsar, who came frequently to Lirias, took pleasure in having it cultivated and embellished: the walks well gravelled, and bordered with orange-trees; a great basin of white marble, in the middle of which a brazen lion vomited out great gushes of water; the beauty of the flowers, the variety of fruits; all these objects ravished Scipio; but he was in a peculiar manner enchanted with a long walk that led by a gentle descent all the way to a farmer's house, and was shaded by the interwoven boughs of the trees planted on each side. Here we stopped to make the eulogium of a place so proper for an asylum against the heat of the day; and sitting down at the root of a young elm, slept easily surprised two merry boys, who had just made such a good dinner.

Two hours after, we started up, awakened by the noise of several shot, which seemed so near that we were frightened. We got up in a hurry, and repaired to the farmer's house, where we found eight or ten peasants, all inhabitants of the hamlet, who had scoured and fired their fusils to celebrate my arrival, of which they had got notice. The greatest part of them knew me, having seen me more than once at the castle, in the exercise of my stewardship. They no sooner perceived me, than they cried all together, 'Long life to our new master, who is welcome to Lirias!' Then they loaded their pieces, and regaled me with a general discharge. I received them as courteously as I could: preserving my gravity, however; thinking it improper to be too familiar

with them. I assured them of my protection, left twenty pistoles among them; and this, I believe, they did not look upon as the most disagreeable part of my behaviour. I afterwards left them at liberty to spend more powder, and retired with my secretary into the wood, where we strolled about till night, without being tired with beholding the groves; so charming is the first view of a new possession.

The cook, his assistant, and scullion, were not idle in the mean time; they were busy in preparing a repast, even superior to that which we had eaten; and we were actually astonished, when, returning into the same hall where we had dined, we saw them place upon the table a dish of roasted partridges, with a *cive** of rabbit on one side, and on the other a capon in ragout. The next course of dainties consisted of pig's ears, pickled chicks, and cream-chocolate. We drank plentifully of Lucena, and several sorts of excellent wine; and when we found we could drink no more, without exposing our healths, we thought of going to bed. Then my lacquies, taking lights, conducted me to the best apartment, where they were very officious in undressing me; but when they gave me my gown and night-cap, I dismissed them; saying, with a magisterial air, 'Leave me, gentlemen; I have no further occasion for you to night.'

I sent them all away; and keeping Scipio for a little conversation, asked what he thought of the treatment I received by order of the noblemen of Leyva. 'In faith!' answered he, 'I think you can't be treated better: I only wish that this may last.' 'I entertain no such wish,' I replied. 'It

* A cive, is a sauce made of the entrails of a hare or rabbit.

ill becomes me to let my benefactors be at such an expense on my account; this were to abuse their generosity: besides, I can't put up with servants who are paid by another; I should not believe myself in my own house. Neither am I come hither to live in a bustle; we have no occasion for such a great number of domestics; we want no more than Bertrand, a cook, a scullion, and lacquey.' Although my secretary would not have been sorry to live always at the expense of the governor of Valencia, he did not oppose my delicacy in this affair; but conforming himself to my sentiments, approved of the reform I intended to make. This being determined, he left me, and retired into his own apartment.

CHAPTER IV.

He departs for Valencia, to visit the noblemen of Leyva. His conversation with them, and the kind reception he met with from Seraphina.

I UNDRESSED, and went to bed; where, feeling no inclination to sleep, I abandoned myself to reflection. I represented to myself the friendship with which the noblemen of Leyva repaid my attachment to them; and, penetrated with those new marks of their affection, resolved to go the very next day, and satisfy the longing impatience I had of seeing and thanking them for their favours. I likewise enjoyed, by anticipation, the pleasure of seeing Seraphina again; but that pleasure was

not pure; I could not, without uneasiness, consider, that I must, at the same time, support the looks of Dame Lorenca Sephora, who, perhaps, remembering the adventure of the box on the ear, would not be overjoyed at sight of me. Fatigued with all these different ideas, I at length fell asleep, and did not wake till after sun-rise.

I was soon a-foot; and, wholly engrossed by my intended journey, dressed myself in a hurry. Just as I had done adjusting myself, my secretary coming into my chamber, 'Scipio,' said I, 'you see me ready to set out for Valencia; I cannot make too much haste in going to salute the noblemen to whom I owe my small fortune: every moment that I delay to acquit myself of this duty, seems to accuse me of ingratitude. As for thee, my friend, I dispense with thy attendance: stay here in my absence, and I will come back to thee in eight days.' 'Go, sir,' he replied; 'pay your respects to Don Alphonso and his father, who seem so sensible of your zeal, and grateful for the services you have done them: persons of quality, of that character, are so rare, that they cannot be too much esteemed.' I ordered Bertrand to get ready for our departure; and while he yoked the mules, I drank my chocolate; then I got into my chaise, after having laid injunctions upon my people to regard my secretary as my other self, and to follow his orders as if they were my own.

I arrived at Valencia in less than four hours; and going straight to the governor's stables, there alighted, left my equipage, and was conducted to the apartment of that nobleman, who was then with his father Don Cæsar. I opened the door, and entering without ceremony, accosted him in these words: 'It does not become valets to send

in their names to their masters; here is one of your old servants come to pay his respects.' So saying, I would have kneeled before them; but they hindered me from so doing, and embraced me, one after another, with all the expressions of genuine affection. 'Well, my dear Santillane,' said Don Alphonso; 'have you been at Lirias to take possession of your estate?' 'Yes, Signior,' replied I; 'and I hope you will give me leave to restore it.' 'For what reason?' said he: 'is there any thing disagreeable about it, that gives you disgust?' 'Not in itself,' I resumed; 'on the contrary, I am enchanted with it. All that displeases me in it, is, to see cooks of an archbishop, with three times more servants than I want; which only serve to put you to an expense equally useless and considerable.'

'If,' said Don Cæsar, 'you had accepted the annuity of two thousand ducats which we offered at Madrid, we should have been contented with giving you the house furnished as it is; but you know you refused the pension; and we thought we could do no less than make you some other recompense.' 'This is too much,' I replied: 'your generosity ought to have been confined to the present of the estate, which is enough to crown my wishes. But exclusive of your cost in maintaining so many people, at a great expense, I declare, that these people incommode and plague me: in a word, my lords, take back your estate, or allow me to enjoy it according to my own desire.' I pronounced these last words with such a determined air, that the father and son, who did not at all intend to lay me under any constraint, promised, at length, that I should live as I pleased in my own house.

I thanked them for having granted me that liberty,

without which I could not be happy; when Don Alphonso interrupted me, saying, 'My dear Gil Blas, I will introduce you to a lady, who will be overjoyed to see you.' With these words he took me by the hand, and led me into the apartment of Seraphina, who screamed with joy when she saw me. 'Madam,' said the governor, 'I believe the arrival of our friend Santillane at Valencia is as agreeable to you as to me.' 'That is what he ought to be convinced of,' answered she: 'time has not made me lose the remembrance of the service he did me; and to the gratitude I myself owe him, I add that which I ought to have on your account.' I told the lady governess, that I was but too well requited for the danger I had shared with her deliverers, in exposing my life for her sake. After many mutual compliments, Don Alphonso brought me back from Seraphina's apartment, and we rejoined Don Cæsar, whom we found in a hall with several persons of quality, who came there to dinner.

All these gentlemen saluted me with great politeness; and were the more civil to me, because Don Cæsar had told them, that I was once one of the Duke of Lerma's principal secretaries. Perhaps, likewise, the greatest part of them knew, it was by my credit that Don Alphonso had obtained the government of Valencia; for every thing is known. Be that as it will, when we were at table, the new cardinal was the whole subject of the discourse. Some gave, or affected to give, him great commendations, while others seasoned their praise with some severe sneers.

From hence I concluded, that they wanted I should enlarge upon his eminence, and make them merry at his expense. I had some inclina

tion to disclose my sentiments of him; but I restrained my tongue: and this silence made me pass, in the opinion of the company, for a man of great discretion.

After dinner, the guests retired to take their siestas at their own home: Don Cæsar and his son, seized with the same desire, shut themselves up in their apartments; and I, impatient to see a city, the beauty of which I had heard so much extolled, went out of the governor's palace with a design to stroll through the streets. At the gate I met a man, who accosted me in these words, 'Signior de Santillane, give me leave to salute you.' When I asked who he was, 'I am now,' said he, 'Don Cæsar's valet de chambre; but was one of his lacquies while you was his steward: I made my court to you every morning, because you was very kind to me; and I informed you of every thing that happened in the house. Don't you remember, that I one day gave you notice, that the surgeon of the village of Leyva was privately admitted into the chamber of Dame Lorença Sephora?' 'I have not forgot it,' I replied; 'but, apropos, what is become of that duenna?' 'Alas!' said he, 'after your departure, the poor creature pined away, and died, more regretted by Seraphina than by Don Alphonso, who seemed very little afflicted at her death.'

Don Cæsar's valet de chambre having thus informed me of Sephora's melancholy end, made an apology for having stopped me; and I continued my walk, sighing at the remembrance of that unfortunate duenna, and lamenting her fate, which I imputed to myself; without considering that it was more owing to her own cancer than to my cruelty.

I observed with pleasure all that was worth seeing in this city; the marble palace of the archbishop agreeably entertained my view, as well as the fine porticos of the exchange; but a large house which I discerned at a distance, and which I saw a great number of people enter, attracted my attention. I approached it, in order to know the reason of such a great concourse of men and women; and was soon satisfied, when I read these words, written in gold letters, on a stone of black marble placed over the gate, *La posada des los representas:** and the players advertised in their bill, that they would that day, for the first time, act a new tragedy composed by Don Gabriel Triaquero.

CHAPTER V.

Gil Blas goes to the play, where he sees a new tragedy acted. The success of that performance, with the public taste of Valencia.

I STOPPED some minutes at the door, to view the people who went in; and observed, that they consisted of all ranks. I saw cavaliers of a genteel mien, and richly dressed, and some figures as ordinary as the clothes they wore. I perceived ladies of quality alight from their coaches, and go to the boxes, which they had ordered to be bespoke; and female adventurers go in with a view of alluring cullies. This concourse of all sorts of

* The Theatre.

spectators made me desirous of increasing the number. Just as I was going to take a ticket, the governor and his lady arriving discerned me in the crowd; and ordering me to be called, carried me into their box, where I placed myself behind them, so as to be able to speak to both with ease. I found the house full of people from top to bottom, the pit very much thronged, and the stage loaded with knights of the three military orders. 'Here is,' said I to Don Alphonso, 'a very numerous assembly!' 'You must not be surprised at that,' answered he: 'the tragedy to be represented is the composition of Don Gabriel Triaquero, surnamed the *modish poet*. As soon as the play-bills advertised a new thing written by that author, the whole city of Valencia was in a flutter: the men as well as the women talk of nothing but this piece; all the boxes are bespoke; and it being the first day of its representation, people are squeezed to death, endeavouring to enter; although every place is double filled except the pit, which they dare not disoblige.' 'Such madness!' said I to the governor: 'that eager curiosity of the public, that furious impatience to see every new production of Gabriel, gives me a high idea of the poet's genius.'

In this part of our conversation the actors appeared; and we left off speaking immediately, in order to listen with attention. The applauses began with the prologue, every verse was attended with a *brouhaha!** and at the end of each act there was such a clapping of hands, that one would have thought the house was falling. After the performance they showed me the author, who went from box to box, modestly presenting his

* A note of applause.

head for the laurels with which the gentlemen and ladies prepared to crown him.

We returned to the governor's palace, where three or four knights arrived in a little time: thither also came two old authors, esteemed in their way, with a gentleman from Madrid of understanding and taste. As they had all been at the play, the whole conversation at supper turned upon the new piece. 'Gentlemen,' said a knight of St. Jago, 'what is your opinion of this tragedy? Is it not what you call a finished work? sublime thoughts, tender sentiments, manly versification, deficient in nothing! in a word, it is a poem adapted to people of taste!' 'I believe nobody can be of a contrary opinion,' said the knight of Alcantara; 'the piece is full of strokes that Apollo seems to have dictated, and of situations conceived with infinite art. I appeal to this gentleman,' added he, addressing himself to the Castilian; 'he seems to be a connoisseur; and I'll wager he is of my sentiment.' 'Don't wager, cavalier,' answered the gentleman, with a sarcastic smile; 'we do not decide so hastily at Madrid: far from judging a piece at its first representation, we distrust its beauties, while they are in the mouths of the actors; and how well soever we may be affected to the author, suspend our judgment until we have read it: and truly it does not always give us the same pleasure upon paper that we received from it on the stage. We scrupulously examine a poem before we esteem it, without being dazzled by the author's reputation, how great soever it may be. When Lope de Vega himself, and Calderona,* produced new pieces, they found in their admirers severe judges, who

* Don Pedro Calderona de la Barca, famous for the excellent comedies he has written.

would not raise them to the highest point of glory until they judged them worthy of that elevation.'

'Zooks!' cried the knight of St. Jago; 'we are not so fearful as you: we don't wait until a piece is printed, but in the first representation fix its value: there is not even occasion for our listening to it with great attention; if we know it to be a production of Don Gabriel, that is enough to convince us that it is without blemish. The works of that poet ought to serve as an epocha for the birth of taste: your Lopes and Calderonas were but apprentices in comparison of this great master of the stage!' The gentleman, who looked upon Lope and Calderona as the Spanish Sophocles and Euripides, was shocked at this rash assertion. 'Such dramatic sacrilege!' cried he. 'Since you oblige me, gentlemen, to judge, like you, from a first representation, I must tell you, that I am not at all satisfied with this new tragedy of your Don Gabriel: it is stuffed with strokes more shining than solid; three parts in four of the verse are bad, or mis-rhymed; the characters ill conceived, and ill supported; and the sentiments are often very obscure.'

The two authors who were at table, and who, through a reserve as commendable as rare, had said nothing, for fear of being suspected of jealousy, could not help applauding the gentleman's sentiments with their eyes; which made me guess, that their silence was not so much owing to the perfection of the work, as to other prudential reasons. As for the knights, they began again to praise Don Gabriel, whom they even placed among the gods. This extravagant apotheosis, and blind idolatry, made the Castilian lose all patience: he lifted up his hands to heaven, and all of a sudden

exclaimed, in a fit of enthusiasm, 'O divine Lope de Vega! rare and sublime genius! who has left an immense space between thee and all the Gabriels who attempt to reach thy excellence! and you, energetic Calderona! whose elegant softness, purged of epic stiffness, is inimitable; do not fear that your altars will be demolished by this new pupil of the muses, who will be very lucky if posterity, which you will delight, as you delight the present age, shall hear his name mentioned.'

The pleasing apostrophe, which nobody expected, raised the laugh of the whole company, which got up from table, and parted. I was conducted, by Don Alphonso's order, into an apartment prepared for me: there I found a good bed, in which my worship went to sleep, deploring (like the Castilian gentleman) the injustice which ignorant people did to Lope and Calderona.

CHAPTER VI.

Gil Blas, walking through the streets of Valencia, meets a friar whom he thinks he knows. An account of that friar.

As I had not seen the whole city in my first excursion, I went out next day, with an intention to take another walk; and perceived in the street a Carthusian friar, who, doubtless, was going to transact the affairs of his community. He walked with downcast eyes, and so devout an air, that he attracted the notice of every body. As he passed

close by me, I looked at him with attention, and thought I saw in him the very person of Don Raphael, that adventurer who maintains such an honourable place in the two first volumes of my Memoirs.

I was so much astonished, so struck with this meeting, that, instead of accosting the monk, I stood immoveable some minutes; during which he was gone a good way from me. 'Just heaven!' said I; 'were ever two faces more alike? What must I think of this affair? Can it be Raphael indeed? or can I doubt that it is he?" I was too curious to know the truth, to remain long where I was. I asked the way to the monastery of the Carthusians, whither I instantly repaired, in hopes of seeing my man again when he should return, and firmly resolved to stop and speak with him. I had no occasion to wait for this: when I came to the gate of the convent, another face of my acquaintance turned my doubts into certainty; I recollected in the porter my old valet Ambrose de Lamela.

We were equally surprised to find one another in that place. 'Don't I dream!' said I, saluting him; 'is it actually one of my friends whom I behold!' He could not recall me at first, or feigned himself ignorant of my features; but, considering that this feint was useless, he affected the air of a person who remembers a thing all of a sudden; 'Ah, Signior Gil Blas!' cried he; 'forgive my want of memory. Since I have lived in this holy place, and applied myself to fulfil the duties prescribed by our rules, I lose insensibly the remembrance of what I have seen in the world.'

'I am sincerely rejoiced,' said I, 'to see you, after an absence of ten years, in such a reverend

dress. 'And I,' he replied, 'am ashamed to appear in it before a person who has been witness of the wicked life I led. This dress incessantly upbraids me. Alas!' added he, sighing profoundly, 'to be worthy of wearing it, I ought to have lived always in innocence.' 'By this discourse, with which I am charmed,' I resumed, 'my dear brother, one may see that you have been touched by the finger of the Lord. I repeat the assurance of my joy at the occasion; and long earnestly to hear in what miraculous manner you and Don Raphael have entered into the right way; for I am persuaded that it was he whom I just now met in the Carthusian habit. I am sorry that I did not stop him in the street, and speak to him; and I wait here for his return, in order to repair my neglect.'

'You are not mistaken,' said Lamela to me; 'it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw; and as to the detail you desire, here it is. After we parted from you, near Segorba, the son of Lucinda and I took the road to Valencia, with a design of playing some new trick of our profession in that city. One day, by accident, we went into the church of the Carthusians, while the monks were singing psalms in the choir. We considered them attentively, and experienced that even the wicked cannot help honouring virtue. We admired the fervour with which they prayed to God, their mortified air, their minds detached from the pleasures of the age, as well as the serenity that reigned in their countenances, and so well expressed the repose of their consciences.

'While we made these observations, we fell into a reverie that became very salutary unto us. We compared our morals with those of the good monks, and the difference which we found, filled

us with sorrow and disquiet. "Lamela," said Don Raphael to me, when we came out of the church, "how art thou affected with what we have seen? For my part, I cannot conceal from thee the anxiety of my mind. I am agitated by emotions hitherto unknown to me; and, for the first time of my life, my conscience upbraids me with my iniquity." "I am in the self-same disposition," answered I; "the evil actions which I have committed, at this instant rise up against me; and my heart, which was before hardened against repentance, is now torn with remorse." "Ah, dear Ambrose!" resumed my comrade, "we are two strayed sheep, whom the Heavenly Father, through pity, intends to bring back into the fold. It is He, my child! it is He who calls us! Let us not be deaf to his voice; let us renounce cheating, quit the libertinism in which we live; and begin from this very day to labour seriously in the great work of our salvation. We must spend the rest of our days in this convent, and consecrate them to piety and penitence."

'I applauded Raphael's sentiment,' continued Brother Ambrose; 'and we formed the generous resolution of becoming Carthusians. To put this in execution, we addressed ourselves to the father prior, who no sooner understood our design, than, in order to prove our vocation, he accommodated us with cells, and we were treated like monks, during a whole year. We followed the rules with such exactness and constancy, that we were received among the novices. We were so well satisfied with our situation, and so full of ardour, that we courageously underwent the toils of the noviciate: we then professed; after which, Don Raphael appearing endued with a genius for business

was chosen assistant to an old father who was at that time solicitor. The son of Lucinda would have rather spent his whole time in prayer, but he was obliged to sacrifice his inclination to the good of the convent. He acquired such a perfect knowledge of the interests of the house, that he was deemed capable of filling the place of the old solicitor, who died three years after. Don Raphael actually exercises that employment at present, and acquits himself in it to the great satisfaction of all our fathers, who praise his conduct very much in the administration of our temporalities. What is very surprising is, that, in spite of the care of collecting our revenues, with which he is invested, he seems engrossed by eternity alone; and when his business leaves him a moment to himself, he employs it in the most profound meditation. In a word, he is one of the holiest monks in our monastery.'

In this place I interrupted Lamela with a transport of joy, that I expressed at the sight of Raphael, who arrived. 'There,' cried I, 'there is the holy solicitor, for whom I waited so impatiently!' At the same time I ran up, and embraced him. He received my salutation with a good grace: and, without discovering the least surprise at meeting, said to me with a voice full of sweetness, 'God be praised, Signior de Santillane! God be praised for the pleasure I have in seeing you!' 'Truly,' I replied, 'my dear Raphael, I share as much as possible in your happiness. Brother Ambrose has recounted to me the history of your conversion, and I was charmed with the narration. What advantage have you both, my friends, in being able to flatter yourselves, that

you are of the small number of the elect, who will one day enjoy eternal felicity!'

'Two wretches, such as we are,' resumed the son of Lucinda, with an air of great humility, 'ought not to conceive such hopes: but the repentance of sinners makes them find favour with the Father of Mercy. And you, Signior Gil Blas,' added he, 'don't you also think of deserving pardon for the crimes you have committed? What business brings you to Valencia? Don't you unhappily fill some dangerous employment in this place?' 'No, thank God!' I replied; 'since I quitted the court, I have led the life of an honest man. Sometimes, at an estate I have some leagues from hence, I enjoy the pleasures of the country; and sometimes I come to make merry with the governor of Valencia, who is my friend, and one who you both know perfectly well.'

Then I recounted the history of don Alphonso de Leyva, to which they listened with attention; and when I told them that I had carried from that nobleman to Samuel Simon the three thousand ducats which we had stole from him, Lamela interrupted me, and addressing himself to Raphael, 'Father Hilary,' said he, 'at that rate, the merchant has no cause to complain of a robbery, for which he has received restitution with usury; and we ought to have quiet consciences on that article.' 'Really,' said the solicitor, 'Brother Ambrose and I, before we entered this convent, sent privately fifteen hundred ducats to Samuel Simon by a worthy clergyman, who took the trouble of going to Xelva, in order to make that restitution; so much the worse for Samuel, if he was capable of touching that sum, after having been reimbursed of the whole by Signior de Santillane.

'But,' said I to them, 'are you sure that your fifteen hundred ducats were faithfully remitted to him?' 'Questionless,' cried Don Raphael; 'I will answer for the clergyman's integrity, as much as for my own.' 'And I will join in the security,' said Lamela; 'he is a holy priest, used to these sorts of commissions, and has had, for things deposited in his hands, two or three law-suits, which he gained with costs.'

Our conversation lasted some time longer; then we parted, they exhorting me to have always the fear of the Lord before my eyes; and I recommending myself to their devout prayers. Going straight to Don Alphonso, 'You can't guess,' said I to him, 'with whom I have had a long conversation! I have just parted with two venerable Carthusians of your acquaintance, one called Father Hilary, and the other Brother Ambrose.' 'You are mistaken,' answered Don Alphonso; 'I know not one Carthusian.' 'Pardon me,' I replied; you saw at Xelva, Brother Ambrose, commissary, and Father Hilary, secretary to the Inquisition.' 'Good heaven!' cried the governor with surprise; 'is it possible that Raphael and Lamela are become Carthusians?' 'Yes, indeed!' said I; 'they have been professed monks some years. The first is solicitor, and the other porter of the convent.'

Don Cæsar's son mused some minutes; then shaking his head, 'Mr. Commissary of the Inquisition and his secretary,' said he, 'are, in my opinion, bent upon playing some new farce here.' 'You are prejudiced against them,' answered I. 'For my own part, having conversed with them, I judge more favourably of their intentions. It is true, we cannot dive into the heart; but, in all appearance, they are two converted sinners.' 'That

may be,' resumed Don Alphonso; 'there have been many libertines, who, after having scandalized the world by their irregularities, shut themselves up in cloisters, to perform a rigorous penance, and I wish our two monks may be of that sort.' 'Why should they not?' said I: 'they have voluntarily embraced a monastic life, and have already lived a long time like good friars.' 'You may say what you please,' replied the governor; 'I don't like that the convent's cash should be in the hands of that same Father Hilary, whose integrity I cannot help distrusting. When I remember that fine detail he gave us of his adventures, I tremble for the Carthusians. I would willingly believe with you, that he has taken the habit from a very pious motive, but the sight of the cash may awaken his cupidity. A reformed drunkard should never be left in a cellar.'

The suspicion of Don Alphonso was fully justified in a few days. Father Solicitor and Brother Porter disappeared with the cash. This piece of news, which was immediately spread all over the city, afforded great mirth to the wits, who always rejoice at the misfortunes which happen to endowed monks. As for the governor and me, we pitied the Carthusians, without boasting of our acquaintance with the two apostles.

CHAPTER VII.

Gil Blas returns to his castle of Lirias; hears an agreeable piece of news from Scipio; and makes a reform in his housekeeping.

I SPENT eight days at Valencia in high taste, living among counts and marquisses. Shows, balls, concerts, entertainments, conversations with the ladies, and other amusements, I enjoyed by the favour of the governor and his lady, to whom I paid my court so successfully, that, when I set out for Lirias, they were sorry to part with me. They even obliged me to promise, that I would divide my time between them and my solitude; and it was agreed, that I should live at Valencia in the winter, and spend the summer at my own house. This convention being made, my benefactors gave me liberty to go and enjoy their favours.

Scipio, who impatiently expected my return, was overjoyed at seeing me; and I redoubled his pleasure by a faithful report of my journey. 'Well, my friend,' said I to him afterwards, 'how didst thou spend the day in my absence? Didst thou divert thyself agreeably?' 'As well,' answered he, 'as a servant could, to whom nothing is so dear as the presence of his master. I have walked all over our small territories. Sometimes seated on the brink of that fountain which is in our wood, I took pleasure in contemplating the beauty of its waters, which are as pure as those of the sacred fountain, that makes the vast forest of Albuna echo with its noise; and sometimes, stretched at the root of a tree, heard the linnets sing, and the nightin-

gales tune their song. In short, I have hunted, I have fished; and what gave me more satisfaction than all other amusements, I have read several books as useful as entertaining.'

I interrupted my secretary with precipitation, to ask where he found these books. 'I found them,' said he, 'in a handsome library, which master Joachim showed me in this castle.' 'Ha! in what part,' said I, 'can this pretended library be? Did we not visit the whole house on the first day of our arrival?' 'So you imagined,' answered he; 'but you must know we surveyed three pavilions only, and forgot the fourth, where Don Cæsar, when he came to Lirias, usually employed a part of his time in reading. There are in this library exceeding good books left for you, as an assured entertainment, when our gardens, stripped of their flowers, and our woods of their leaves, shall have nothing left to amuse us. The noblemen of Leyva have not done things by halves, but provided food for the mind, as well as for the body.'

Truly rejoiced at this piece of news, I followed him into the fourth pavilion, which presented a very agreeable scene to my view. I beheld a chamber, which from that hour I destined to be my apartment, as it had been Don Cæsar's. The bed of that nobleman was still there, together with all the rest of the furniture; that is, a tapestry with figures representing the rape of the Sabine women. From this room I went into a closet, surrounded with low presses filled with books, over which appeared the portraits of our kings. There was also hard by a window, from whence we had a view of a most delightful country, and an ebony bureau standing before a large soqha.

covered with black moroquin. But I bestowed my chief attention upon the library, which was composed of philosophy, poetry, history, and a great number of romances on the subject of knight-errantry. I concluded that Don Cæsar loved this last kind of writing, since he had made such plentiful provision of it. I must confess, to my shame, that I was no less pleased with these productions, notwithstanding all the extravagances with which they are interwoven; whether it was owing to my being at that time no very considerate reader, or that Spaniards in general are too much captivated by the marvellous. I will say, nevertheless, that I took more pleasure in reading sprightly books of morality; and that Lucian, Horace, and Erasmus, became my favourite authors.

'Friend,' said I to Scipio, when I had surveyed my library, 'here is amusement indeed; but our present business is to retrench our housekeeping.' 'I will spare you that task,' answered he. During your absence, I have studied your people, and now may boast of knowing them perfectly well. Let us begin with Master Joachim, who, I believe, is a complete rogue, and I don't doubt that he was turned out of the archbishop's service for having committed arithmetical blunders in his accounts. Nevertheless, we must keep him, for two reasons; the first is, because he is a good cook; and the second, because I shall always have an eye over him. I will be a spy upon his actions; and he must be as cunning as the devil if he be able to deceive me. I have already told him, that you intended to dismiss three-fourths of your servants; a piece of news that gave him some pain; and he assured me, that, feeling an inclination to serve you, he would, rather than leave the house,

be contented with half of his present wages; a circumstance which makes me suspect that there is some girl in the village from whom he would not willingly remove. As for the cook's assistant,' added he, 'he is a drunkard; and the porter an insolent fellow, for whom we have not the least occasion, any more than for the fowler; I can easily fill up the place of this last, as I will show you to-morrow, since we have plenty of fusils, powder, and shot. With regard to the lacquies, there is one of them from Arragon, seemingly a good lad, him we will keep; the rest are such rogues, that I would not advise you to retain them, even if you wanted a hundred valets.'

Having maturely deliberated on this affair, we resolved to keep the cook, scullion, Arragonian footman, and rid ourselves honourably of the rest. This was executed that very day, by means of some pistoles, which Scipio took from the strong-box, and divided among them by my order. When he had made this reformation, we established a certain order in the house, regulated the office of each domestic, and began to live at our own expense. I would have been contented with a frugal ordinary; but my secretary, who loved ragouts and dainties, was not the man to leave Master Joachim's skill unemployed. He kept him so well at work, that our dinners and suppers might have served a company of Bernardine monks.

CHAPTER VIII.

The amours of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia.

Two days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, Basil the labourer, my farmer, came in the morning to ask leave to present Antonia his daughter, who, he said, wanted to have the honour of saluting her new master. I told him, that it would give me great pleasure; upon which he went out, and returned soon after with the fair Antonia. I think I may give that epithet to a maid of sixteen or eighteen years, who, with the most regular features, possessed the fairest complexion and finest eyes in the world. Though she was clad in a stuff gown, her rich air, majestic port, and graces that do not always accompany youth, dignified the simplicity of her dress. She wore no cap on her head, her hair being tied up behind with a knot of flowers, in the manner of the Lacedæmonian women. When she entered my chamber, I was as much struck with her beauty, as the knights of Charlemagne's court with the charms of Angelica. Instead of receiving Antonia with ease, and saying kind things to her; instead of congratulating the father on his happiness in having such a charming daughter, I stood confounded, astonished, and mute. Scipio, who perceived my disorder, spoke in my room, and was at the expense of those praises which I owed to that lovely creature. As for her part, not at all dazzled by my figure, in my morning-gown and cap, she saluted me without any concern, and made me a compliment, which, though uncommon, enchanted my affection. In the mean time,

while my secretary, Basil, and his daughter, were employed in mutual civilities, I recollected myself; and, to make amends for the stupid silence I had hitherto kept, passed from one extremity to another, launched out into gallant discourse, and spoke with so much vivacity, that I alarmed Basil, who, looking upon me already as a man who would put every thing in practice to seduce Antonia, went out of my apartment with her in a hurry, resolved, perhaps, to withdraw her from my eyes for ever.

Scipio, seeing himself alone with me, said, with a smile, 'Here's another resource against the tedious hours. I did not know that your farmer had such a handsome daughter, having never before seen her, though I have been twice at her father's house: he must be at great pains to conceal her; and I commend his care. Egad, she's a delicate morsel! But,' added he, 'I believe I need not say so to you, who were dazzled by her at first sight.' 'I don't deny it,' answered I. 'Ah! my child, I thought I saw a celestial substance. She inflamed me all of a sudden, and pierced my heart with an arrow swift as lightning.'

'I am ravished,' replied my secretary, 'to learn, that you are at last in love. You wanted a mistress to make you enjoy perfect happiness in your solitude. Thank heaven! you have now all sorts of conveniences! I know,' continued he, 'that we shall have some difficulty in deceiving the vigilance of Basil; but leave that to me: I undertake, in three days, to procure for you a private interview with Antonia.' 'Mr. Scipio,' said I, 'perhaps you might not be able to keep your promise; but that is not what I am curious to try. I have no intention to tempt the virtue of that girl, who

seems to deserve that I should entertain other sentiments of her. Wherefore, far from exacting of your zeal that you should assist me in dishonouring her, I am resolved, by your mediation, to espouse her, provided her heart is not engaged to another.' 'I did not expect,' said he, 'to see you take such a sudden resolution to marry. Many country gentlemen in your place would not deal so honourably; they would never entertain legitimate views with regard to Antonia, until they had tried others to no purpose. But, however,' added he, 'don't imagine that I condemn your love, and seek to dissuade you from your design. Your farmer's daughter deserves the honour you intend for her, if she can bestow upon you a heart unengaged, and sensible of your generosity. This I must inform myself of to-day, in a conversation with her father, and perhaps with herself.'

My confidant, who was a punctual man in performing his promises, went privately to visit Basil; and in the evening came to see me in my closet, where I waited with impatience mingled with fear. Drawing a good omen from his cheerful look, 'if I may believe,' said I, 'that smile on thy face, thou comest to signify, that I shall soon enjoy my wish.' 'Yes, my dear master,' he replied; 'every thing is propitious to you. I have had a conversation with Basil and his daughter, to whom I declared your intention. The father is overjoyed to hear your design to be his son-in-law; and I can assure you, that you are very much to Antonia's taste.' 'O heaven!' cried I, in a transport of joy; 'what! am I so happy as to be agreeable to that lovely creature?' 'Doubtless,' he resumed. 'She already loves you. I have not, indeed, drawn that confession from her mouth; but I am convinced of

her passion, by the gaiety she discovered when she understood your design. Nevertheless,' added he, 'you have a rival.' 'A rival!' cried I, changing colour. 'You need not be much alarmed,' said he; 'that rival will not rob you of the heart of your mistress; he is no other than Master Joachim, your cook.' 'Ah! the hang-dog!' said I, bursting into a fit of laughter: 'this was his reason for showing such reluctance to quit my service.' 'The very same,' answered Scipio. 'He some days ago demanded Antonia in marriage, and met with a polite refusal.' 'With deference to thy better advice,' I resumed, 'methinks it will be proper to rid ourselves of the rogue, before he can get notice that I intend to marry Basil's daughter; a cook, thou knowest, is a dangerous rival.' You are in the right,' replied my confidant: 'we must clear the house of him. I will give him his leave to-morrow morning before he begins to work, and then you shall have nothing to fear either from his sauces or his love. I am sorry, however, to lose such an excellent cook; but I sacrifice my palate to your safety.' 'Thou needest not regret him so much,' said I; 'the loss is not irreparable: I will send to Valencia for a cook as good as he. 'And indeed I wrote immediately to Don Alphonso, that I had occasion for a cook; and the very next day he sent one who consoled Scipio at once.

Although the zealous secretary had told me, that he perceived Antonia was pleased in her heart with the conquest which she had made of her master, I durst not depend upon his report, being apprehensive that he might have been deceived by false appearances. To be more sure of the matter, I resolved to speak in person to the fair Antonia: and, repairing to Basil's house, con-

firmed what my ambassador had told him. That honest peasant, a man of frankness and simplicity, having heard my design, assured me, that he would bestow his daughter upon me with the utmost satisfaction: 'But,' added he, 'don't think that it is on account of your being lord of the manor. Were you still no more than the steward of Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, I would prefer you to all the other suitors who present themselves. I have always had a regard for you; and what gives me the most concern is, that Antonia cannot bring you a large fortune.' 'I ask nothing with her,' said I; 'her person is all the wealth to which I aspire.' 'Your most humble servant!' cried he; 'that is not my intention: I am not such a beggar, as to marry my daughter in that manner. Basil de Buenotrigo is in a condition, thank God, to give her a dowry; and for every dinner you bestow upon her, she shall afford a supper to you. In a word, the rent of your estate, which is but five hundred ducats, shall amount to a thousand, by virtue of this marriage.'

'You shall do in that as you please, my dear Basil,' I replied; 'we shall have no disputes about interest: and now that we are agreed, the sole business is to obtain the consent of your daughter.' 'You have mine,' said he; 'and that is enough.' 'Not altogether,' answered I; 'if your's is necessary, her's is so too.' 'Her's depends upon me,' said he: 'I would fain see her refuse!' 'Antonia,' I resumed, 'submissive to paternal authority, is ready, without doubt, to obey you implicitly; but I don't know if she can do it upon this occasion without reluctance; and if she can't, I should never be consoled for having made her unhappy; in short, it is not enough for me to obtain her

hand of you, unless her heart goes to the bargain.' 'By'r lady!' said Basil; 'I don't understand all this philosophy: speak yourself to Antonia, and you shall see, if I am not mistaken, that she desires no better than to be your wife.' So saying, he called his daughter, and left me alone with her for a minute or two.

That I might enjoy the precious opportunity, I came to the point at once. 'Fair Antonia,' said I, 'determine my fate. Although I have your father's consent, don't think that I intend to avail myself of it, in doing violence to your inclination. Charming as it is, I renounce the possession of you, if you say that I must owe it to your obedience only.' 'That is what I will not say,' answered she: 'your addresses are too agreeable to give me pain; and, instead of murmuring, I approve of my father's choice. I don't know,' continued she 'whether I do well or ill in talking thus: but if you was disagreeable to me, I should be frank enough to own it; why then may I not say the contrary with the same freedom?'

At these words, which I could not hear without being charmed, I kneeled before Antonia; and, in the excess of my joy, seizing one of her fair hands, kissed it with the utmost tenderness and passion. 'My dear Antonia,' said I, 'I am enchanted with your frankness: continue the same unconstrained behaviour; and, as you speak to your husband, disclose your whole soul to his view. May I then flatter myself, that you will be pleased to see your fortune joined to mine?' Basil coming in at that instant, hindered me from proceeding. Impatient to know his daughter's answer, and ready to grumble, had she shown the least aversion for me, 'Well,' said he, 'are you

satisfied with Antonia?' 'I am so well satisfied with her,' answered I, 'that I will, this very moment, go and make preparations for my marriage.' So saying, I took my leave of the father and daughter, to go and consult with my secretary on that subject.

CHAPTER IX.

The manner in which the nuptials of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia were celebrated; and the rejoicings with which they were attended.

Although I was under no necessity of obtaining the permission of the noblemen of Leyva, Scipio and I concluded, that we could not, in honour, omit imparting to them my design of marrying Basil's daughter, and of asking their consent, out of good manners.

I set out immediately for Valencia, where they were as much surprised to see me as to hear the cause of my journey. Don Cæsar and his son having seen Antonia more than once, congratulated me on my choice. Don Cæsar, especially, complimented me upon it with such vivacity, that if I had not believed him to be a man quite weaned from certain amusements, I should have suspected that he had gone sometimes to Lirias to see his farmer's daughter, rather than to visit his own house. Seraphina, after having assured me, that she would always bear a large part in what should

concern me, said she had heard a very good character of Antonia: 'But,' added she, with a satirical look, as if she reproached me for the indifference with which I repaid Sephora's passion, 'if I had not heard her beauty extolled, I should depend upon your taste, the delicacy of which I know.'

Don Cæsar and his son not only approved of my marriage, but declared that they would defray the whole expense of it. 'Go back to Lirias,' said they, 'and make yourself easy, until you hear from us. Make no preparations for your nuptials, but leave that to our care.' In compliance with their desire, I returned to my house, and making Basil and his daughter acquainted with the intention of our patrons, we waited their orders as patiently as we could. During eight days, however, we received none: but, to make amends, on the ninth, a coach and four arrived full of mantua-makers, and rich stuffs for the bride's clothes, and escorted by several men in livery mounted on mules. One of them brought a letter for me from Don Alphonso, importing, that he would be at Lirias next day, with his father and spouse, and that the ceremony of my marriage should be celebrated on the day following by the grand vicar of Valencia. Accordingly, Don Cæsar, his son, and Seraphina, did not fail to come with that clergyman, all four together, in a coach and six, preceded by another drawn by four, in which were Seraphina's women, attended by the governor's guards.

My lady governess was scarce arrived, when she expressed the utmost impatience to see Antonia; who, on her part, no sooner understood that Seraphina was alighted, than she ran to salute her, and kissed her hand with such a good grace, that all

the company admired her politeness. 'Well, madam,' said Don Cæsar to his daughter-in-law, 'what do you think of Antonia? Could Santillane have made a better choice?' 'No, indeed,' replied Seraphina; 'they are worthy of each other; and I don't doubt that their union will be perfectly happy.' In short, every one praised the bride; and if she was much applauded in her country garb, every body was charmed with her when she appeared in a richer dress. Her air was so noble, and her deportment so easy, that one would have thought she had never wore any other.

The moment being arrived in which propitious Hymen was to join my fate to her's, Don Alphonso, taking me by the hand, led me to the altar, while Seraphina did the same honour to the bride. In this order we repaired to the village chapel, where the vicar attended to marry us; and that ceremony was performed amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants of Lirias, and all the rich farmers in the neighbourhood, whom Basil had invited to Antonia's wedding, with their daughters, dressed in ribands and flowers, holding tabors in their hands. We then returned to my house; where, by the care of Scipio, who was contriver of the feast, we found three tables covered, one for the noblemen, another for their attendants, and the third, which was the largest, for the rest of the guests. Antonia sat at the first, by desire of the lady governess; I did the honours of the second; and Basil took care of the third. As for Scipio, he did not sit, but went from one table to another, employing himself in serving and satisfying every individual.

As the entertainment was prepared by the governor's cooks, it could not fail of being complete in all its parts. The good wines, of which Master

Joachim had made ample provision, were drank with profusion; the guests began to wax warm, and mirth and jollity reigned, when we were, all of a sudden, interrupted by an incident that alarmed me. My secretary being in the hall, where I sat at table with the principal officers of Don Alphonso, and Seraphina's women, fell down upon the floor, without sense or motion. I ran to his assistance, and, while I was busied in bringing him to himself again, one of the women fainted away. All the company concluded, that there must be some mystery in this double swooning, as it actually concealed one, which, in a little time, was explained; for soon after Scipio recovered his spirits, and said softly to me, 'Why should the happiest of your days be the most disagreeable of mine! It is impossible for one to shun his destiny,' added he; 'I have found my wife in the person of one of Seraphina's maids.'

'What do I hear!' cried I; 'that is not possible! what, art thou the husband of the lady who was taken ill at the same time with thee?' 'Yes, sir,' he replied, 'I am her husband; and Fortune, I swear, could not play me a more villanous trick than that of bringing her to my view.' 'I don't know, my friend,' said I, 'what reason thou hast to complain of thy wife; but, whatever cause she may have given thee, pray constrain thyself; if thou lovest me, do not disturb this entertainment by showing thy resentment.' 'You shall be satisfied with my behaviour,' replied Scipio, 'and see whether or not I can dissemble.'

So saying, he went up to his wife, who, by the assistance of her companions, was also recovered, and embracing her with the appearance of as much passion as if he had been ravished to see

her again, 'Ah, my dear Beatrice!' said he, 'heaven unites us again, after ten years of separation: O happy moment for me!' 'I don't know,' answered his wife, 'whether or not you feel any joy in meeting me here; but this I am certain of, I gave you no just cause to leave me. What! you found me one night with Signior Don Fernando de Leyva, who was in love with my mistress Julia, and whose passion I assisted; and you took it in your head that I listened to him, at the expense of your and my honour; thereupon jealousy turned your brain, you quitted Toledo, and fled from me as from a monster, without deigning to come to an explanation! Which of us two, if you please, has the most reason to complain?' 'You, to be sure,' replied Scipio. 'Yes, doubtless,' said she. 'Don Fernando, soon after your departure from Toledo, married Julia, with whom I staid as long as she lived; and since we are robbed of her, by an untimely death, I have been in the service of my lady her sister, who, as well as her women, can answer for the purity of my morals.'

My secretary, at this discourse, the falsity of which he could not prove, behaved as became him. 'Once more,' said he to his wife, 'I own my fault, and ask pardon before this honourable assembly.' Then I, interceding for him, begged that Beatrice would forget what was past; assuring her, that, for the future, her husband's sole study should be to give her satisfaction. She yielded to my entreaty, and the whole company applauded their re-union; for the better celebration of which they were made to sit by one another, their health was toasted, every body complimented them, and the feast seemed to have been made rather on account of their reconciliation than of my nuptials.

The third table was the first forsaken. The young peasants got up to dance with the country maids; who, by the noise of their tabors, soon brought the company from the other rooms, and inspired them with the desire of following their example. Every body was now in motion; the governor's officers began to dance with the attendants of my lady governess; the noblemen themselves mingled in the diversion. Don Alphonso danced a saraband with Seraphina. Don Cæsar performed with Antonia, who came afterwards and took me out, acquitting herself very well, considering that she had only received a few lessons in the house of a relation, who was the wife of a citizen of Albarazin. As for me, who had learned in the house of the Marchioness of Chaves, the assembly looked upon me as a great dancer. With regard to Beatrice and Scipio, they preferred a private conversation to dancing, and gave each other an account of what had happened to them since their parting; but they were interrupted by Seraphina, who, being informed of their meeting, sent for them to express her joy at their reconciliation. 'My children,' said she, 'on this day of rejoicing, it is an addition to my satisfaction, to see you restored to each other. Friend Scipio, I give you back your spouse, and protest to you, that her conduct has always been irreproachable: you may live here happily together; and you, Beatrice, attach yourself to Antonia, and be as much devoted to her, as your husband is to Signior de Santillane.' Scipio, after this, could not help looking upon his wife as another Penelope, and promised to treat her with all imaginable affection.

The young peasants and their partners having

danced all day, retired to their houses; but the festival was continued at the castle, where a magnificent supper was prepared; and when it was time to go to rest, the grand vicar blessed the nuptial bed: Seraphina undressed the bride, and the noblemen of Leyva did me the same honour. What was merry enough, the officers of Don Alphonso, and the ladies of the governess, took in their heads to perform the same ceremony to Beatrice and Scipio; who, to make the scene more comical, very gravely allowed themselves to be stripped and put to bed.

CHAPTER X.

What followed the marriage of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia. The beginning of Scipio's history.

On the very next day after my marriage, the lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, after having given me a thousand new marks of friendship; so that my secretary and I remained in the house, with our wives and servants only.

The care which both of us took to please the ladies was not ineffectual; in a little time, I inspired my wife with as much love for me as I had for her; and Scipio made his spouse forget the sorrows which he had made her suffer. Beatrice, who had a pliant, obliging temper, easily insinuated herself into the favour, and gained the confidence,

of her mistress. In short, we agreed, all four, to admiration, and began to enjoy a situation worthy of envy. All our days glided away in the most agreeable amusements. Antonia was naturally grave, but Beatrice and I were very gay; and had we been otherwise, Scipio's presence was enough to keep off melancholy. He was an incomparable fellow for society, one of those comical creatures whose appearance alone can make a company merry.

One day, that we took a whim after dinner to go and take a siesta in the most agreeable place of the wood, my secretary was in such a good humour, that he banished all desire of sleeping by his merry discourse. 'Hold thy tongue, friend,' said I; 'or if thou art resolved to keep us from taking our nap, entertain us with some story worthy our attention.'

'With all my heart, sir,' answered he; 'shall I recount the history of King Pelagius?'* 'I would rather hear thy own,' I replied; 'but that is a pleasure thou hast not thought proper to give me since we lived together, nor ever will, I suppose.' 'And what is the reason?' said he. 'If I have not recounted my own history, it was because you never expressed the least desire to hear it: it is not, therefore, my fault that you are ignorant of my adventures; and if you are in the least curious to know them, I am ready to satisfy your curiosity.' Antonia, Beatrice, and I, took him at his word, and disposed ourselves in order to hear his

* Pelagius reigned in the eighth century, and was some time in subjection to the Saracens; but putting himself at the head of the Christians, and being declared king, took arms against the infidels, whom he vanquished, and laid the foundation of the kingdom of Leon, in which he reigned twenty years.

narration, which could not miss of having a good effect, either in diverting, or lulling us to sleep.

'Had it depended upon me,' said Scipio, 'I should have been the son of some grandee, or knight of Alcantara at least; but as one does not choose his own father, you must know that mine was an honest soldier of the Holy Brotherhood, Torribio Scipio by name. While he was travelling to and fro on the highway, where his profession obliged him almost always to be, he met by accident one day, between Cuença and Toledo, a young gipsy, whom he thought very handsome. She was alone on foot, and carried her whole fortune in a kind of knapsack on her back. "Which way do you go, my dear?" said he to her, softening his voice, which was naturally rough. "Signior Cavalier," answered she, "I am going to Toledo, where I hope to gain an honest livelihood, in some shape or other." "That is a laudable intention," he resumed, "and I don't doubt that you have more strings than one to your bow." "Yes, thank God," said she; "I have more talents than one; I can compose pomatums and essences for the ladies; I tell fortunes; turn the sieve to find things that are lost; and show all that people want to see in a glass or mirror."

'Torribio, concluding that such a girl would be a very advantageous match for him, who could scarce live by his employment, though he was very dexterous at it, offered to marry her: she accepted the proposal, and they repaired with all diligence to Toledo, where they were wedded; and you see in me the worthy fruit of these noble nuptials. They settled in the suburbs, where my mother began to sell pomatums and essences; but that trade not answering, she became fortune-

teller. It was then that she saw the crowns and pistoles shower upon her! a thousand dupes of both sexes soon raised the reputation of Coscolina, which was the gipsy's name. Somebody came every day, to beg she would employ her ministry for him: sometimes a needy nephew, who wanted to know when his uncle, whose sole heir he was, would set out for the other world; and sometimes a girl, wishing to know if a certain cavalier, to whom she had granted the favour on promise of marriage, would keep his word.

'Please to observe, that my mother's predictions were always favourable to those who solicited them: if they proved true, good and well; but when they came back to reproach her, because the contrary of what she had prophesied came to pass, she answered coldly, that they must attribute it to the demon; who, notwithstanding the force of the conjurations that she employed to make him reveal what would happen, was sometimes so malicious as to deceive her.

'When my mother, for the honour of her profession, thought she must make the devil appear in her operations, Torribio Scipio always acted that part, which he performed perfectly well, the roughness of his voice, and ugliness of his face, giving him an appearance suitable to the character which he represented. Those that were in the least timorous, were always terrified by my father's figure. But one day, unfortunately, there came a brutal fellow of a captain to see the devil, whom he ran through the body. The Holy Office, informed of the devil's death, sent its officers to the house of Coscolina, whom they seized with all her effects; and I, who was then but seven years

old, was put into the hospital of *Los Ninos.** There were in that house charitable clergymen; who, being well paid for the education of poor orphans, were at the trouble of teaching them to read and write. They looked upon me as a promising child, and on that account distinguished me from the rest, by choosing me to run on their errands. They sent me into the city with letters and messages; and I made the responses at mass. By way of recompense, they undertook to teach me the Latin tongue; but they behaved so rudely, and treated me with such rigour, notwithstanding the small services I did them, that, being no longer able to bear it, I ran away one morning early, when I was sent out on an errand; and, far from returning to the hospital, quitted Toledo by the suburbs that lie on the Seville side of the city. Though I was scarce yet nine years old, I felt a sensible pleasure in being free, and master of my own actions. I was without money, and without food; but what did that signify? I had no lessons to study, nor themes to compose. After having walked about two hours, my little legs began to refuse their service: I had never before made such a long journey; and I found myself obliged to halt, and give them some rest. I sat down under a tree, by the side of the road, and there, for my amusement, took my rudiments out of my pocket, and read it in sport; then remembering the stripes and floggings which it had made me receive, I tore out the leaves, saying in great wrath, "Ah, dog of a book! thou shalt never make me shed tears again." While I thus glutted my revenge, strewing the ground about me with declensions and conjugations, a hermit passed

* Orphans, or rather boys.

by, with a white beard, large spectacles, and a venerable air. He came up to me, and we examined each other with great eagerness. "My little gentleman," said he, smiling, "we seem to look at one another with great attention: I believe it would not be a bad scheme for us to live together in my hermitage, which is not two hundred yards from hence." "I am your humble servant!" answered I, hastily; "I have no ambition to be a hermit." The good old man laughed at this reply; and embracing me, said, "Don't be frightened at my dress, my son; though it is not agreeable, it is useful; it makes me lord of a charming retreat, and of the neighbouring villages; the inhabitants of which love, or rather idolize me. Come along with me," added he, "and I will give you a jacket like this I wear. If you choose it, you shall share with me the sweets of my retired life; and if you don't like it upon trial, you shall not only be at liberty to leave me, but you may be also assured, that I will not fail of giving you a gratification at parting." I suffered myself to be persuaded, and followed the old hermit, who asked me several questions; to which I answered with an ingenuity which I have not always preserved in the sequel. When we came to the hermitage, he presented to me some fruit, which I devoured, having eaten nothing the whole day but a morsel of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted in the morning at the hospital. The anchorite, seeing me make such good use of my jaws, said, "Courage, my child; don't spare the fruit; I have ample provision of it, thank God, and I did not bring thee hither to let thee starve." This was indeed very true; for in less than an hour after our arrival, he lighted a fire, spitted a

leg of mutton; and, while I turned the spit, covered a small table with a very dirty napkin; upon which he laid two plates, one for himself, and the other for me.

'When the mutton was ready, he took it off the spit, and cut some slices for our supper, which was not a dry meal; for we drank excellent wine, of which also he had got store. "Well, my chicken," said he, when we had done eating, "art thou satisfied with my ordinary? This is the manner in which thou shalt be treated every day, if thou livest with me. Besides, thou shalt do what thou pleasest in this hermitage. All that I exact of thee is, to accompany me when I go a begging through the neighbouring villages, and lead an ass with two panniers, which the charitable peasants usually fill with eggs, bread, flesh, and fish. This is all I require of thee." "I will do every thing you desire," I replied, "provided you don't oblige me to learn Latin." Brother Chrysostom (that was the old hermit's name) could not help laughing at my simplicity; and assured me anew, that he did not intend to force my inclination.

'We went a begging the very next day with the ass, which I led by the halter, and reaped a plentiful harvest; every peasant being glad of an opportunity to put something in our panniers: one threw in a whole loaf; another, a large piece of bacon; a third, a partridge; in short, we brought home victuals enough for eight days; a circumstance that denotes the great friendship and esteem that the country people had for the hermit. It is true, he was of great use to them, in giving them his advice when they came to consult him, in re-establishing peace in families where discord reigned, in marrying their daughters, in furnishing

them with remedies for a thousand sorts of diseases, and in teaching prayers proper for barren women who wished to have children.

'By what I have said, you see that I was well fed in my hermitage; I was as well accommodated in point of sleeping: stretched upon good fresh straw, with a cushion of coarse cloth under my head, and a covering of the same stuff over my body, I made but one nap, which lasted all night long. Brother Chrysostom, who had promised to give me a hermit's garb, made one for me from an old robe that he used to wear, and called me little Brother Scipio. As soon as I appeared in the villages, in that regular habit, I was thought so handsome, that the ass was better loaded than formerly: the business was, who should give most to the little brother, with whose figure they were so well pleased.

'The easy idle life, which I led with the old hermit, could not be disagreeable to a boy of my age: accordingly, I liked it so well, that I should have continued there still, if the Fates had not spun for me days of a very different kind; but the destiny which I was bound to fulfil, soon detached me from idleness, and made me quit Brother Chrysostom, as you shall hear. I frequently perceived the old man at work upon the cushion that served him for a pillow; he did nothing but sew and unsew it; and I observed, one day, that he put money into it. This remark was attended by a curiosity which I proposed to gratify the very first journey he should take to Toledo, whither he was wont to go once a week. I waited impatiently for the day, without having as yet any other design than of satisfying my curiosity. At length the old man set out, and I ripped up his

pillow, where I found among the wool with which it was filled, the value of about fifty crowns in different sorts of coin.

'This treasure, in all probability, was the gratitude of the country people, whom the hermit had cured by his remedies, and of the women who had been blessed with children, by virtue of his prayers. Be this as it will, I no sooner saw that it was money which I could appropriate to myself with impunity, than my Egyptian disposition prevailed. I was seized with a desire of stealing it, which can be attributed to nothing but the force of that blood which circulated in my veins. I yielded to the temptation without resistance, secured the money in a kind of bag where we kept our combs and night-caps; then quitting my hermit's habit, and resuming that of an orphan, I ran away from the hermitage, believing that I carried off in my bag the whole riches of the Indies.

'You have heard my beginning,' continued Scipio; 'and I don't doubt that you expect a train of facts of the same nature: your expectation will not be deceived; I have many other such exploits to recount before I come to my laudable actions; but I will come to them at last; and you will see, by my narration, that a rogue may very well turn an honest man.

'Child as I was, I was not fool enough to return to Toledo; that would have been exposing me to the chance of meeting Brother Chrysostom, who would have made me restore my treasure in a very disagreeable manner: I followed another road, which conducted me to the village of Galves; where I stopped at an inn, the landlady of which was a widow of forty, who had all the qualities requisite for turning the penny. The woman no

sooner cast her eyes upon me, than judging, by my dress, that I was a fugitive from the Orphan Hospital, she asked who I was, and whither I went. I answered, that having lost both father and mother, I wanted to go to service. "Child," said she, "canst thou read?" I assured her that I both read and wrote to admiration. Indeed, I could form my letters, and join them in such a manner as somewhat resembled writing; and that is enough for the occasions of a village tavern. "I take thee into my service," said the landlady; "thou shalt not be altogether useless, but shalt keep an account of all my debts, active and passive. I will give thee no wages," added she; "because the good company that come here, never forget the servants; so that thou mayest depend upon receiving good perquisites."

'I accepted the proposal, reserving to myself, as you may well believe, the right of changing the air, as soon as my stay at Galves should become disagreeable. When I found myself engaged in the service of this inn, I became very uneasy in my mind: I did not desire to be thought a monied man; and was very anxious to know where I should conceal my hoard, so that it should be secure from every stranger's hand. I did not as yet know the house well enough to trust to those places which seemed most proper to secure it. With what perplexity are riches attended! I determined, however, to put my bag in a corner of our corn-loft where there was straw; and believing it more safe there than in any other place, made myself as easy as possible. There were three servants in this house; a fat ostler, a young maid of Galicia, and myself: each of us drew as much as we could from the travellers that halted, whether they came on

horseback or a-foot. I commonly caught some halfpence of these gentlemen, when I brought in the bill: they gave something also to the hostler, for taking care of their beasts; but as for the Galician, who was the idol of all the carriers that passed, she got as many crowns as we did farthings. Every penny that I received, I carried to increase my treasure in the corn-loft; and the more I saw my wealth increase, the more did I feel my little heart attached to it: I sometimes kissed the specie, and contemplated the different pieces with a degree of rapture which none but misers can conceive.

'This affection for my treasure obliged me to go and visit it thirty times a day: I frequently met the landlady upon the stair; and she being naturally distrustful, was curious, one day, to know what it was that could bring me every moment to the corn-loft. Thither therefore she went, and searched every corner, imagining that I, perhaps, concealed in that place some things which I had stole in the house. She did not forget to remove the straw that covered my bag, which having found, she opened it; and seeing crowns and pistoles appear, believed, or pretended to believe, that I had stole them from her. She seized the sum total accordingly: then, calling me little wretch, and little rascal, ordered the hostler, who was entirely devoted to her will, to give me fifty good lashes; which, when I had received, she turned me out of doors, saying, that she would suffer no knave to live in her house. In vain did I protest that I had not robbed the landlady: she maintained the contrary; and of course her word was believed rather than mine. Thus Brother Chrysostom's money passed from one thief to another.

'I lamented the loss of my money as a man mourns the death of an only child; and though my tears did not retrieve what I had lost, at least they excited the compassion of some people who saw them shed; and among others, of the Curate of Galves, who was passing by chance. He seemed moved at my melancholy condition, and carried me along with him to the parsonage; where, in order to gain my confidence, or rather to pump me, he began by pitying my situation. "How much," said he, "does this poor child deserve compassion? It is not surprising if, abandoned to himself in such a tender age, he has committed a bad action. Most men find it difficult to live honest through the whole course of their lives." Then addressing himself to me, "My son," added he, "from what part of Spain do you come, and who are your parents? You seem to be of some good family. Tell me ingenuously, and be assured that I will not abandon you."

'The curate, by this politic and charitable discourse, engaged me insensibly to discover all my affairs with great sincerity. I made a general confession. After which he said, "Friend, though it does not become hermits to hoard up money, that does not lessen your crime; in robbing Brother Chrysostom, you have transgressed that article of the decalogue which forbids theft: but I'll oblige the landlady to restore the money, which I will send to the hermit; so that your conscience may be easy on that score." But this, I swear, was the least of my uneasiness. The curate, who had a design of his own, did not stop there: "My child," said he, "I will interest myself in your behalf, and procure a good place for you. I will to-morrow send you by a carrier to my nephew, who is

a canon of the cathedral of Toledo; he will not refuse, at my request, to receive you into the number of his lacquies, who live plentifully, like so many incumbents, on the revenue of his prebend: you will be perfectly well situated, I can assure you."

'I was so much consoled by this assurance, that I no longer thought of the bag nor the stripes which I had received, my mind being wholly possessed with the pleasure of living like an incumbent. Next day, while I was at breakfast, a carrier came to the parsonage, according to the curate's orders, with two mules bridled and saddled. I was helped up on the one, the carrier mounted on the other, and we set out for Toledo. My fellow traveller was a fellow of humour, who liked nothing better than to make himself merry at another's expense. "My little junior," said he, "you have a good friend in the Curate of Galves; he could not give you a better proof of his affection than that of recommending you to the service of his nephew the canon, whom I have the honour to know, and who is, without contradiction, the pearl of the whole chapter. He is none of those devotees whose pale and meagre faces preach up mortification. He has a capacious countenance, a rosy complexion, a merry look, is a jovial soul who enjoys the present hour, and in particular loves good cheer. You will live in his house like a prince."

'The rogue of a carrier, perceiving that I listened with great satisfaction, continued to extol the happiness I should enjoy in the canon's service; and did not leave off speaking until we arrived at the village of Obisa, where we stopped a little to bait our mules. The carrier, while he

walked about the inn, let fall by accident, out of his pocket, a paper, which I was cunning enough to pick up without being observed, and which I found means to read while he was in the stable. It was a letter directed to the priests of the Orphan Hospital, and conceived in these terms:

"GENTLEMEN,

"I THOUGHT I was bound in charity to send back to you a little knave, who is a runaway from your hospital. He does not seem to want capacity, but deserves to be carefully mewed up; and I hope that, by proper correction, he will in time do well. That God may preserve your pious and charitable worships, is the prayer of

THE CURATE OF GALVES."

'When I had read this letter, which informed me of the curate's good intention, I did not long hesitate. To leave the inn, and gain the banks of the Tagus, which was more than a league from thence, was the work of a moment. Fear lent me wings to fly from the priests of the Orphan Hospital, to whom I would by no means return, so much was I disgusted with their manner of teaching the Latin tongue. I entered Toledo as gaily as if I had known where to board. True, it is a city of benediction, in which a man of genius, reduced to the necessity of living at his neighbour's expense, cannot die of hunger. Scarce had I arrived in the market-place, when a well-dressed cavalier, whom I passed, laid hold of my arm, and said, "Hark'e, my boy, will you serve me? I should be glad to have such a lacquey as you." "And I should be glad," answered I, "to have such a master as you." "If that be the case," he resumed, "thou art

mine from this moment. Follow me." This I did without making any further reply.

'This cavalier, who might be about thirty years of age, and was called Don Abel, lodged in a house where he possessed a very handsome apartment. He was by profession a gamester, and we lived together in this manner: in the morning, I cut as much tobacco for him as would fill five or six pipes, brushed his clothes, and went for the barber to shave him and dress his whiskers. After which he went out, and made a tour among the tennis-courts, from whence he returned about eleven or twelve o'clock at night. But each morning before he went out, he gave me three rials for my day's expense, leaving me at liberty to do what I pleased until ten o'clock at night. He was very well satisfied with me, provided he found me at home when he returned. He ordered a doublet and hose of livery to be made for me, so that I looked like the page of a lady of the town. I was very well satisfied with my place, and certainly I could not have found one more agreeable to my humour.

'I had led this happy life almost a whole month, when my master asked if I was pleased with his behaviour. I answered, that I could not be more so. "Well then," he resumed, "we shall set out to-morrow for Seville, whither my affairs call me. Thou wilt not be sorry to see that capital of Andalusia:

"He that hath not Seville seen,

(saith the proverb)

"Is no traveller, I ween."

'I assured him, that I was ready to follow him whithersoever he should go. That very day, the

Seville carrier came to his lodging, to fetch a large coffer that contained all his moveables; and in the morning we set out for Andalusia.

'Signior Don Abel was so lucky at play, that he never lost, except when he chose to lose. This talent often obliged him to change his place of habitation, that he might avoid the resentment of dupes; and this was the cause of our present journey. Being arrived at Seville, we took lodgings near the gate of Cordova, and began to live as we had lived at Toledo: but my master found a difference between these two cities. In the tennis-courts of Seville he met with gamesters who played as successfully as he; so that he came home sometimes very much out of humour. One morning, being chagrined at the loss of one hundred pistoles, which he ventured the preceding day, he asked why I had not carried his dirty linen to a woman whom he employed to wash and perfume it. I answered, that I had forgot. Upon which, falling into a passion, he gave me half a dozen boxes on the face, so rudely, that he made me see more candles than ever burnt in Solomon's temple. "There, little wretch," said he; "there is something to make you mind your business. Must I be always at your tail, to tell you what you have to do?, why are you not as ready to work as to eat? are you such a beast as to be incapable of anticipating my orders and occasions?" So saying, he went out of his apartment, leaving me very much mortified at the blows I had received for such a slight fault. I don't know what adventure happened to him soon after in the tennis-court, but one evening he came home very much heated, and said, "Scipio, I am resolved to go to Italy, and must embark the day after to-morrow, in a

ship bound for Genoa. I have my own reasons for making that voyage: wilt thou not accompany me, and lay hold of such a fair occasion to see the most delightful country in the world?" I said I would; but at the same time purposed to disappear just when he intended to embark. I thought I would revenge myself of him in this manner; and was very well pleased with the scheme, which I could not help imparting to a professed bravo whom I met in the street: for, since my arrival at Seville, I had contracted some bad acquaintances, and this in particular. I told him in what manner and for what I had been buffeted, then communicated my design of leaving Don Abel when he should be just ready to go on board, and asked his opinion of my resolution.

'The bravo frowned while he listened to me, and twirled the curls of his mustachio; then, blaming my master with an air of gravity, "Little gentleman," said he, "you are dishonoured for ever, if you restrict yourself to that frivolous revenge which you have hatched. It is not enough to let Don Abel depart by himself; that would not be punishment sufficient. The chastisement must be proportioned to the injury. Let us therefore carry off his goods and money, which we will share like brothers after he is gone." Although I was naturally inclined to thieving, I was frightened at the proposal of such an important robbery. Nevertheless, the arch rogue who made it, did not fail to persuade me to it; and you shall hear the success of our enterprise. The bravo, who was a big strong fellow, came to our lodging next day in the twilight, when I showed him the coffer in which my master had already secured his effects, and asked if he could carry such a weight. "Such

a weight!" said he; "know, that when the business is to carry off the goods of another, I can lift Noah's ark." So saying he slung the coffer on his shoulders with ease, and went down stairs with it upon tip-toes. I followed him with some caution, and we were just going out at the street-door, when Don Abel, brought thither so seasonably by his good genius, appeared all of a sudden.

"Where art thou going with the coffer?" said he. I was so confounded, that I stood silent; and the bravo, seeing the affair misgive, threw down his load, and betook himself to flight, in order to avoid explanations. "Where art thou going with the coffer?" said my master a second time. "Sir," answered I, more dead than alive, "I am going to carry it on board the ship in which you are to embark to-morrow for Italy." "Ha!" he replied, "dost thou know in what ship I intend to sail?" "No, sir," said I; "but I have a tongue in my head; and I should have inquired at the harbour, where somebody would have certainly told me." At this my answer, which he suspected, he darted such a furious look at me, that I was afraid of a second beating. "Who ordered you," cried he, "to bring my coffer out of the house?" "You yourself," said I. "Don't you remember how you upbraided me some days ago? Did not you say, while you beat me, that you expected I would prevent your orders, and do what was proper for your service of my own accord? Now it was in consequence of this direction that I employed one to carry your coffer to the ship." The gamester observing that I was more mischievous than he imagined, dismissed me immediately; saying, with an air of indifference, "Go, Mr. Scipio, and Heaven be your guide. I don't choose to

play with people that have sometimes a card too many, sometimes one too few. Get out of my sight," added he, in another tone, "lest I make you sing without your gamut." I saved him the trouble of repeating his command, and got off in a twinkling; being woundily afraid that he would strip me of my clothes, which, however, he luckily spared. I walked along the street, considering where I could lie with my two rials, which constituted my whole stock. I arrived at the gate of the archbishop's palace; and, as his grace's supper was then dressing, an agreeable savour issued from the kitchen, and diffused itself a whole league around. "Zooks!" said I to myself, "I should like to despatch one of those ragouts which salute my nose. I should even be contented with an opportunity of dipping my four fingers and thumb in it. What, can't I fall upon some method of tasting those dainties that smell so agreeably! the thing does not seem impossible." I whetted my imagination accordingly; and, by dint of musing, hatched a trick, which I immediately put in practice, and which succeeded to my wish. I entered the court of the palace, and running towards the kitchen, cried as loud as I could, "Help! help!" as if I had been pursued by some assassin.

'At my repeated cries, Mr. Diego, the archbishop's cook, with two or three scullions, came running out to know the cause; and, seeing nobody but me, asked why I made such a noise. "Ah, sir!" said I, pretending to be frightened almost out of my wits, "for the love of St. Polycarp! pray, save me from the fury of a bravo that wants to kill me!" "Where is this bravo?" cried Diego; "you are quite alone, without so much as a cat at your heels. Go, my child, lay aside

your fear. It was probably somebody that wanted to terrify you for his diversion, and who did well not to follow you into this palace; for, if he had, we should have cut off his ears." "No, no," said I to the cook; "he did not pursue me for his diversion. He is a big ill-looking fellow, who intends to strip me, and waits hard by in the street to catch me as I go out." "He shall wait a long time then," he replied: "for you shall stay here till to-morrow, and want for neither supper nor bed."

'I was transported with joy when I heard these words; and it was a ravishing sight to me, when, being conducted into the kitchen, by Mr. Diego, I beheld the preparation for his grace's supper. I reckoned fifteen persons at work, but I could not number the dishes that I saw, so careful Providence had been in behalf of the archbishop. It was then that, feasting upon the steams of the ragouts which I had only smelled afar off before, I became acquainted with sensuality. I had the honour to sup and sleep with the scullions, whose friendship I gained to that degree, that, next day, when I went to thank Diego for the asylum he had so generously afforded, he said, "Our kitchen lads tell me, they would be glad to have you for a comrade, they like your humour so well; would you choose to be their companion?" I answered, that if I enjoyed that piece of good fortune, I should think myself perfectly happy. "If that be the case, my friend," said he, "look upon yourself from this moment as an officer of the palace." So saying, he went and presented me to the major domo, who, on account of my sprightly look, judged me worthy to be received among the turnspits.

'I was no sooner in possession of this honourable

employment, than Mr. Diego, according to the custom of cooks in great families, who privately send victuals to their mistresses, chose me to carry to a certain lady in the neighbourhood sometimes loins of veal, and sometimes fowl or venison. This good lady was a widow scarce turned of thirty, very handsome, very smart, and, to all appearance, not over faithful to her cook, who not only furnished her with victuals, bread, sugar, and oil, but also provided her in good wine, all at the expense of the archbishop.

'I was effectually improved in the palace of his grace, where I played a very pleasant prank, which is still spoken of at Seville. The pages, and some other domestics, in order to celebrate their master's birth-day, took it in their heads to represent a comedy. They chose that of the *Benavides*,* and as they had occasion for a boy of my age, to play the part of the young King of Leon, they cast their eyes upon me. The major-domo, who piqued himself upon his talent of declamation, undertook to instruct me; and, after he had given me a few lessons, assured them, that I would not be the worst actor in the play. As our master was at the expense of the entertainment, no cost was spared to render it magnificent. A theatre was built in the largest hall in the palace, and decorated with great taste. There was a bed of turf made in the back scene, on which I was to appear asleep, and the Moors fall upon me to make me prisoner. When the actors were perfect in their parts, the archbishop fixed the day for the representation, and did not fail to invite the most considerable noblemen and ladies of the city

* A noble family in Spain, descended from Alonzo the ninth king of Castile.

to come and see it. The day being come, each actor was busied with his dress. As for mine, it was brought to me by a tailor, accompanied by the major-domo; who, having been at the trouble of teaching me my part, was also pleased to superintend my dress. The tailor clothed me with a rich velvet robe, trimmed with gold lace and buttons; and hanging sleeves adorned with fringe of the same metal; and the major-domo himself placed upon my head a crown of paper, powdered with a quantity of fine pearls intermixed with false stones. Besides, they girded me with a sash of pink-coloured silk, wrought with silk flowers; and every thing they said to me seemed to lend me wings to run away with the plunder. At length, the play began about twilight. I opened the scene, by pronouncing some verses, importing, that, being unable to keep myself awake, I was going to abandon myself to slumber; at the same time I withdrew, and lay down on the bed of turf which had been prepared for me; but, instead of falling asleep, I began to consider how I could get into the street, and escape with my royal robes. A little private stair, that led down under the theatre into the hall, seemed proper for the execution of my design. I accordingly got up nimbly, and seeing that nobody took notice of me, slipped down that stair, which conducted me into the hall, the door of which I gained, crying, "Room, room! I am going to change my dress." Every one made way for me; so that, in less than two minutes, I got out of the palace with impunity, and, by favour of the night, repaired to the house of a bravo of my acquaintance.

'He was perfectly astonished to see me in that garb; and, when I imparted the affair, he laughed

until he was ready to burst; then embracing me with so much the more joy as he flattered himself with the hopes of sharing the spoils of the King of Leon, he congratulated me on having performed such a fine stroke; and told me, that, if I went on at that rate, my genius would one day make a great noise in the world. After we had sufficiently made ourselves merry, "What shall we do with this rich dress?" said I to the bravo; who answered, "Give yourself no trouble on that score. I know an honest broker, who, without expressing the least curiosity, buys every thing that is brought to him, provided he likes the bargain; to-morrow morning I will go and bring him hither." In effect, the bravo went out next day early, leaving me a-bed in his room, and in two hours returned with the broker, who carried a yellow bag under his arm. "Friend," said he to me, "this is Signior Ybagnez de Segovia, who in spite of the bad example shown by his brethren of the trade, deals with the most scrupulous integrity. He will tell you to a farthing the value of this dress that you want to part with, and you may depend upon his estimation." "Yes, certainly," said the broker. "I must be a wretch indeed, if I prized a thing under the true value. That is a crime with which I was never taxed, thank God; and no man shall ever lay it to the charge of Ybagnez de Segovia. Let us see the goods you want to sell, and I will conscientiously tell you what they are worth." "Here they are," said the bravo, showing them; "and you must allow that nothing can be more magnificent: observe the beauty of that Genoa velvet, and the richness of the trimming." "I am quite charmed with it," replied the broker, after he had viewed it attentively; "nothing can be

finer." "And what do you think of the pearls of this crown?" resumed my friend. "If they were more round," said Ybagnez, "they would be inestimable: however, such as they are, I think them very pretty, and like them as well as the rest of the dress. I sincerely own it," continued he, "another rogue of a broker in my place would pretend to despise the merchandise, that he might have it cheap, and would not be ashamed of offering twenty pistoles for it; but I, who have some conscience, will give forty."

'If Ybagnez had said a hundred, he would not then have been a just appraiser; since the pearls alone were well worth two hundred crowns. The bravo, who had a fellow-feeling with him, said to me; "You see how fortunate you are in falling into the hands of an honest man. Signior Ybagnez prizes every thing as if he was upon his death-bed." "That's true," said the broker; "and therefore I never rise or fall a farthing in my price. Well," added he, "is it a bargain? shall I count out the money to you?" "Stay," replied the bravo; "my friend must try on this suit of clothes, which I desired you to bring him. I am mistaken if they wont fit him exactly." Then the broker, untying his bundle, showed me a doublet and hose, of a very good dark-coloured cloth, with silver buttons; the whole seemingly half worn. I got up to try this dress; which, though both too long and too wide, appeared to those gentlemen to have been made on purpose for me. Ybagnez rated it at ten pistoles; and, as he never abated one farthing of what he asked, we were obliged to comply with his valuation. So he took thirty pistoles out of his purse, and spread them upon the table; after which he made another

bundle of my crown and royal robes, which he carried off accordingly.

'When he was gone, the bravo said, "I am very well satisfied with this broker." And good reason he had to be so; for, I am sure, he gave him one hundred pistoles, at least, by way of gratification. But he was not contented with that sum: he took, without ceremony, the half of the money that lay on the table, leaving the other half to me, and saying, "My dear Scipio, with these fifteen pistoles that remain, I advise you to quit this city forthwith; for you may be assured that the archbishop will give orders to search for you every where. I should be extremely mortified if, after having signalized yourself by an action which will do honour to your history, you should foolishly suffer yourself to be apprehended." I answered, that I was fully resolved to leave Seville; and, in effect, after having bought a hat and some shirts, I gained the vast and delightful plain that stretches, among vines and olives, to the ancient city of Carmona, and three days after arrived at Cordova.*

'I lodged at an inn as you enter the great square where the merchants live; and gave myself out for the son of a good family at Toledo, who travelled for my pleasure. I was well enough clothed to make people believe this story; and the landlord

* Cordua, anciently Corduba, Colonia Patricia, a royal, large, and fine city of Spain, the capital of a little kingdom of its own name in Andalusia. It is situated on the Guadelquiver, at the foot of a high mountain, a branch of the Sierra Morena: it is the see of a bishop, under the archbishop of Toledo; the roof of the cathedral is supported by three hundred and sixty-five pillars of different species of marble, and was a Turkish mosque in the time of the Saracens. It contains about fourteen thousand families, has a university, and a good trade in wine, silk, and Cordovan leather. It lies seventy-four miles north-east of Seville.

was finally convinced by the sight of some pistoles, which I let him see as if by chance. It is probable, indeed, that my tender years made him believe I was some little libertine who had run away from his parents, after having robbed them. Be this as it will, he did not seem curious to know more than what I told him of the matter; being, in all likelihood, afraid that his curiosity might make me change my lodging. For six rials a-day, I lived very well in this inn, which was frequented by a good deal of company, there being at supper in the evening no less than twelve people at table. It was very diverting to see every one eating without speaking a syllable, except one man, who, talking incessantly at random, compensated for the silence of the rest, by his impertinent prating. He affected the wit, told stories, and endeavoured, by quaint sayings, to entertain the company; who, from time to time, laughed heartily, though not so much at the brightness of his sallies as at his ridiculous behaviour.

'As for my part, I paid so little attention to the discourse of this original, that I should have risen from supper without being able to give any account of what he said, had he not found means to interest me in his conversation. "Gentlemen," said he, towards the end of our meal, "I have kept for the dessert a most diverting story: an adventure that befell, a few days ago, at the palace of the archbishop of Seville. I had it from a bachelor of my acquaintance, who told me, that he was present when it happened." These words discomposed me a good deal; I did not doubt that it was my adventure which he intended to recount; and I was not mistaken. This person gave a faithful detail of it, and even informed me of what I

did not know, that is, what happened in the hall after my departure; and this you shall hear.

'Scarce had I betook myself to flight, when the Moors, who, according to the performance which was represented, were to carry me off, appeared upon the stage, with a design of surprising me on the bed of turf, where they thought I was asleep; but when they went to seize the king of Leon, they were very much astonished to find neither king nor knave. The play was immediately interrupted: all the actors were perplexed; some called me, others searched for me; one hallooed, and another cursed me. The archbishop, perceiving the trouble and confusion that reigned behind the scenes, asked what was the matter. A page, who acted the Gracioso of the piece, hearing the prelate's voice, came out, and said to his grace, "My lord, you need not fear that the Moors will take the king of Leon prisoner; he has escaped with his royal robes." "Heaven be praised!" cried the archbishop; he was very much in the right to fly from the enemies of our religion, and escape the chains which they had prepared for him. He has, doubtless, returned towards Leon, the capital of his kingdom; and I wish he may get home without meeting with any bad accident. Let no man go in pursuit of him, for I should be sorry if his majesty received any mortification from me." The prelate having spoke in this manner, ordered my part to be read, and the play to go on.

CHAPTER XI.

The sequel of Scipio's history.

'As long as my money lasted, the landlord treated me with great respect; but no sooner did he perceive that my finances were exhausted, than he looked cool upon me, picked a quarrel, and one morning early desired me to leave his house. I quitted it with disdain, and went into a church belonging to the Dominicans, where, while I heard mass, an old mendicant came, and asked alms of me. I took two or three maravedis out of my pocket, and giving them to him, said, "Friend, pray to God to send me some good place: if your prayer is heard, you shall not repent of your devotion, and may depend upon my gratitude."

'At these words the beggar viewed me very attentively, and answered with a serious air, "What post would you have?" "I could wish," said I, "to be a lacquey in some good family." He then asked if my occasions were pressing. "They cannot be more so," I resumed; "for, if I have not the good fortune of being settled very soon, there is no medium; I must either die of hunger, or betake myself to your trade." "If you are reduced to such necessity," said he, "you, who are not at all calculated for our business, must be in a very disagreeable situation: but, were you in the least accustomed to our way of life, you would prefer it to servitude, which is, without contradiction, inferior to beggary. Nevertheless, since you choose to be a servant, rather than to live a free and independent life, as I do, you shall have a master immediately. Notwithstanding my appearance,

I can be of use to you: therefore come hither to-morrow at the same hour."

'Resolved to be punctual, I returned next day to the same place; where I had not been long, before the mendicant, coming up to me, bid me take the trouble to follow him. I did so. He conducted me to a cellar not far from the church; and this was the place of his residence. We entered his habitation; and, sitting down upon a bench, which was at least a hundred years old, he spoke to me in this manner: "A good action, as the proverb says, always finds its recompense; you gave me charity yesterday, and that determines me to procure a place for you; and this, please God, I will soon perform. I am acquainted with an old Dominican, called Father Alexis, who is an holy ecclesiastic, and great confessor. I have the honour to run his errands, and acquit myself in that employment with so much fidelity and discretion, that he never refuses to use his interests for me and my friends. I have spoke to him of you in such a manner, that he is disposed to do you service; and I will present you to his reverence whenever you please." "There is not a moment to lose," said I to the old beggar; "let us go instantly to the good friar." The mendicant consented, and carried me forthwith to Father Alexis, whom we found in his room, busy in writing spiritual letters. He interrupted his work to speak to me, and told me, that, at the request of the mendicant, he would interest himself in my behalf. "Having been informed," added he, "that Signior Balthazar Velasquez wanted a lacquey, I wrote this morning in your favour; and he has answered, that he will receive you implicitly on my recommendation. You may, this very day, go to him

from me; he is my penitent and friend." The monk, on this occasion, exhorted me, during three quarters of an hour, to do my duty with fidelity and diligence. He enlarged particularly on the obligation I was under to serve Velasquez with zeal: after which, he assured me, that he would take care to maintain me in my post, provided my master should be pleased with my behaviour. Having thanked the monk for his generosity, I came out of the convent with the beggar; who told me, that Signior Balthazar Velasquez was an old rich woollen-draper of great meekness and simplicity. "I dare say," added he, "that you will be perfectly happy in his family." I inquired whereabouts the citizen lived, and went immediately to his house, after having promised to make an acknowledgment to the beggar as soon as I should take root in my place. I entered a large shop, where two well-dressed apprentices were walking to and fro, in expectation of customers; and, asking if their master was at home, told them, I had a message to him from Father Alexis. At the mention of that venerable name, I was shown into the back shop, where the merchant sat at a bureau, turning over the leaves of a large day-book. I saluted him with great respect, saying, while I advanced, "Signior, I am the young man whom the reverend Father Alexis recommended to you for a lacquey." "Ha! welcome, my child," said he; "that holy man's recommendation is sufficient. I receive thee into my service, in preference to three or four lacquies that were sent by other people. It is agreed: thy wages run up from this day forward."

'I had not been long in the service of this citizen, before I perceived him to be just such a

man as the beggar had described. His simplicity seemed even so great, that I could not help thinking I should find some difficulty in abstaining from playing him some trick or other. He had been a widower four years, and had two children, a son turned of five and twenty, and a daughter going in her fifteenth year; who being brought up by a severe duenna, and directed by Father Alexis, walked in the path of virtue: but Gaspard Velasquez, her brother, though nothing had been spared in his education, had all the vices of a young spendthrift. He sometimes lay two or three nights abroad; and if, at his return, his father took it into his head to reprimand him, Gaspard imposed silence upon him in a tone still higher than that of the old man.

"Scipio," said the draper to me one day, "I have a son who is the sole plague of my life; he is plunged in all manner of debauchery: a circumstance that surprises me very much; for his education was by no means neglected. I gave him good masters, and my friend Alexis hath done his utmost endeavour to put him in the right road; but he could not succeed: Gaspard is fallen into a state of libertinism. Thou wilt say, perhaps, that I treated him too gently in the beginning of his youth; and that he was undone by my indulgence; but that was not the case; he was always chastised when I thought he deserved to be used with rigour: for, good-natured as I am, I have resolution enough, when there is occasion for it. I have even ordered him to be confined; and the consequence was, he became more wicked than ever. In a word, he has one of those bad dispositions which cannot be improved by good example,

remonstrances, or chastisements. Heaven alone can work that miracle!"

'If I was not much moved at the sorrow of this unhappy father, at least I pretended to be so. "How much are you to be pitied, sir!" said I; "a good man, like you, deserves to have a much better son." "Heaven, my child," answered he, "is pleased to deprive me of that consolation. Among other causes which Gaspard gives me to complain of him," added he, "I will tell thee, in confidence, there is one that makes me very uneasy, that is, the inclination which he has to rob me, and which he but too often finds means to satisfy, in spite of all my vigilance. The lacquey, who you succeed, was in concert with him, and for that reason I turned him away. As for thee, I hope thou wilt not suffer thyself to be corrupted by my son; but espouse my interest, as Father Alexis has doubtless exhorted thee." "That I'll answer for," said I; "his reverence exhorted me a whole hour to have nothing in view but your advantage: but I can assure you, I had no need of being exhorted to that; I feel myself disposed to serve you faithfully, and my zeal will prove itself on all occasions."

'He who hears one side only, hears nothing. Young Velasquez, who was a devilish beau, judging by my physiognomy, that I would be as easily seduced as my predecessor, took me aside into a private place, and spoke to me in these terms; "Hark'e, my dear, I am persuaded that my father has charged thee to be a spy upon my actions: take care of thyself; I give thee notice beforehand that the employment is none of the most agreeable. If ever I perceive that thou makest thy remarks upon me, I will cudgel thee to death·

whereas, if thou wilt assist me in cheating my father, thou mayest depend upon my gratitude. Must I be more plain with thee? thou shalt have a share of the purchase. Make thy choice, therefore, and declare this instant either for the father or son, for I will admit of no neutrality."

"Sir," answered I, "you are very short with me; and I plainly perceive, that I cannot help espousing your cause, though in my heart I feel a reluctance to betray Signior Velasquez." "Thou oughtest to make no scruple in so doing," replied Gaspard; "he is an old miser, who wants to keep me still in leading-strings; a wretch who denies me the necessaries of life, in refusing to furnish me with money for my pleasures; for pleasures are the necessaries of life, at the age of five-and-twenty; thou must therefore look upon my father in that point of view." "Enough, sir," said I; "there is no such thing as holding out against so just a cause of complaint. I offer my service to second you in your laudable undertakings; but let us conceal our mutual intelligence, that your faithful associate may not be turned out of doors. You will do well, methinks, in affecting to hate me: speak roughly to me before people, and do not spare ill language; even some boxes on the ear, and kicks on the breech, will not be amiss; on the contrary, the more marks of aversion you bestow upon me, the more confidence will Balthazar have in my integrity. As for my part, I will pretend to avoid your conversation: in serving you at table, I will seem to acquit myself with regret; and when I talk of you to the apprentices, don't take it ill, that I rail at you with great bitterness."

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"Because," answered he, "my father, through distrust, or some other motive, may take it in his head to hide it elsewhere; and therefore it is better to have one for ourselves." I approved of his caution; and, yielding to his inclination, prepared for taking the impression of the key. This was executed one morning early, while my old master paid a visit to Father Alexis, with whom he had usually long conversations. This was not all; I used the key in opening the box, which being filled with large and small bags, threw me into a charming perplexity: I did not know which to choose, such affection did I conceive for both kinds. Nevertheless, as the fear of being surprised did not permit me to make a long scrutiny, I laid hold of one of the largest at a venture: then locking the coffer, and replacing the key behind the hangings, I quitted the chamber with my prey, which I went and concealed under my bed, in a small wardrobe where I lay.

'Having performed this operation so successfully, I went immediately to the young Velasquez, who waited for me in a house where he had appointed to meet me, and gave him infinite joy, by telling what I had done. He was so well satisfied, that he loaded me with caresses, and generously offered me the half of the money which was in the bag: but that I refused, saying, 'No, no, sir; this first bag is your own, use it for your occasions: I will soon return to the strong-box, where, thank heaven! there is money enough for us both." In effect, three days after this, I carried off a second bag, containing, as the former, five hundred crowns, of which I would receive one fourth only, notwithstanding the pressing instances of

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of his nymph, was afraid of losing the privilege of visiting her. He had genius enough, however, to invent an expedient which supported his expense a few days longer: and that ingenious shift was, to appropriate to himself, by way of loan, all my share of the evacuations which I had performed in the strong-box. I gave it all, to the very last piece; and this, methinks, may pass for anticipated restitution which I made to the old merchant in the person of his heir.

'The young man, when he had exhausted this resource, considering that he had none left, fell into a profound and gloomy fit of melancholy, which gradually disordered his reason. He looked upon his father as the only plague of his life; he was seized with the most violent despair; and, without listening to the voice of nature, the wretch conceived the horrible design of poisoning his parent. He not only communicated this execrable project to me, but even proposed that I should be the instrument of his vengeance. Being struck with horror at the proposal, "Sir," said I, "is it possible that you should be so abandoned by heaven, as to form this abominable resolution? What! are you capable of murdering the author of your own being? Shall it be said, that in Spain, in the very bosom of Christianity, a crime was committed, the very idea of which raises horror in the most barbarous nations? No, my dear master," added I, falling on my knees before him; "no; you will not commit an action which would justly incense the whole world against you, and be attended with the most infamous chastisement."

'I said a great many things more to dissuade Gaspard from such a guilty undertaking. I don't

know where I found all the arguments of a virtuous man, which I used to combat his despair: but, certain it is, I spoke like a doctor of Salamanca, though I was but a boy, and no other than the son of Coscolina. Nevertheless, in vain did I represent to him, that he ought to reflect seriously, and courageously repel those detestable sentiments which had taken possession of his soul. All my eloquence was ineffectual: he hung his head, and remained in sullen silence; so that I concluded he would not swerve from his resolution, notwithstanding all I could say.

'Whereupon I went and demanded a private conversation with my old master; to whom, when we were shut up in a room together, I said, "Suffer me, sir, to throw myself at your feet, and implore your mercy." So saying, I fell down before him in great agitation, with my countenance bathed in tears. The merchant, surprised at my prostration, and the disorder of my looks, asked what I had done. "A deed," I replied, "of which I now heartily repent, and with which I will upbraid myself as long as I live. I have been weak enough to listen to your son, and to assist him in stealing your money." I then made a sincere confession of all that had passed on that subject: after which I gave him an account of the conversation I had with Gaspard, whose design I revealed, without forgetting the least circumstance.

'Bad as his opinion of his son was, old Velasquez could scarce credit my information; the truth of which, however, having no reason to doubt, "Scipio," said he, raising me, for I was still on my knees, "I pardon thee, in consideration of the important notice thou hast given me. Gaspard," added he, raising his voice, "Gaspard has

a design upon my life! Ah, ungrateful son! ah, monster! who had better been stifled in the birth than allowed to live and become a parricide! What cause hast thou to attempt my life? I allow thee a reasonable yearly sum for thy pleasures, and thou art not satisfied! Must I permit thee to squander away my whole fortune?" Having uttered this bitter apostrophe, he laid injunctions upon me to keep the secret, and said he would consider what was to be done in such a delicate conjuncture.

'I was very anxious to know what resolution this unfortunate father would take, when that very day he sent for Gaspard, and spoke thus to him, without manifesting a tittle of what he had in his head. "Son, I have received a letter from Merida, importing, that if you choose to marry, you may have a maiden of that place, who is but fifteen years old, perfectly handsome, and mistress of a good fortune: if you have no reluctance to the marriage, we will set out early to-morrow for Merida, visit the lady who is proposed, and, if you find her to your liking, you shall espouse her forthwith." Gaspard, hearing mention made of a good fortune, which he thought was already in his clutches, answered without hesitation, that he was ready to go: so that next morning, at daybreak, they departed by themselves, mounted on two good mules.

'When they had got as far as the mountains of Fesira, into a place as much frequented by robbers as dreaded by travellers, Balthazar alighted, desiring his son to do the same. The young man obeyed, and asked the reason of their quitting their mules in that place. "I will tell thee," answered the old man, darting at him a look in

which his grief and indignation were painted, "we have no business at Merida; and the marriage which I mentioned is only a fable I invented to bring thee thither. I am not ignorant, ungrateful and unnatural son! I am not ignorant of the crime which thou hast hatched; I know that I am to be presented with poison prepared by thee: but, fool that thou art, dost thou flatter thyself that thou canst deprive me of my life in that manner with impunity? Thou art mistaken; thy guilt would soon be discovered, and thou wouldst perish by the hand of the hangman. There is," added he, "a surer method of satisfying thy rage, without exposing thyself to an ignominious death: we are here without witnesses, in a place where murders are committed every day; since thou art so estranged from my blood, plunge thy poniard into my bosom, and the murder will be imputed to robbers!" So saying, Balthazar baring his breast, and pointing to his heart, "Here, Gaspard," added he, "strike the mortal blow, and punish me for having given being to such a wretch as thee!"

'Young Velasquez, thunderstruck at these words, far from seeking to justify himself, fell without sense or motion at his father's feet. The good old man, seeing him in that condition, which seemed to be the beginning of repentance, could not help yielding to his paternal weakness, and flying to his assistance: but Gaspard no sooner recovered the use of his reason, than, being unable to bear the presence of a father so justly incensed, he made an effort to get up, mounted his mule, and rode off without speaking a word. Balthazar let him go, and leaving him to the remorse of his own conscience, returned to Cordova.

where, six months after, he learned that his son had thrown himself into the monastery of Carthusians at Seville, there to pass the rest of his days in penitence.'

CHAPTER XII.

The conclusion of Scipio's history.

'BAD example sometimes produces good effects. The conduct of young Velasquez made me reflect seriously upon my own. I began to combat my thievish inclinations, and live like an honest man. The habit of seizing all the money I could lay my hands on, was so much confirmed in me, by repeated acts, that it was not easily vanquished. Nevertheless, I did not despair of succeeding, imagining, that to become virtuous, required only a sincere desire of being so. I therefore undertook this great work, and heaven seemed to bless my efforts; I no longer beheld the old merchant's strong-box with a covetous eye; and I believe, that, had it been in my power, I should not have touched one of his bags: I own, however, that it would have been very imprudent in him to put my infant integrity to such a proof; and therefore Velasquez took care not to do it.

'Don Manriquez de Medrano, a young gentleman, and knight of the order of Alcantara, came frequently to our house. We had his custom; and if he was not the best, he was, at least, the most noble, of those who used the shop. I had the

good fortune to please that cavalier, who, every time he met me, encouraged me to speak, and seemed to listen with pleasure to what I said. "Scipio," said he one day, "if I had a lacquey of thy humour, I should think myself in possession of a treasure; and if thou didst not belong to a man for whom I have a regard, I would do my endeavour to debauch thee from his service." "Sir," said I, "you would find it a very easy task; for I have an inclination to serve people of quality: that is my foible; I am charmed by their easy behaviour." "If that be the case," replied Don Manriquez, "I will desire Signior Balthazar to consent to thy leaving him, and coming into my service; I don't believe he will refuse me that favour." Indeed Velasquez granted it the more easily, as he did not think the loss of a roguish lacquey irreparable: for my own part, I was glad of the change; the valet of a citizen appearing to me a mere beggar, in comparison to the lacquey of a knight of Alcantara.

'To draw a faithful picture of my new patron, I must tell you, that he was a cavalier endued with a most amiable person, and with such sweetness of temper and cultivated understanding, as captivated every body who knew him: besides, he had a great deal of courage and probity, and wanted nothing but fortune. Being cadet of a family more illustrious than rich, he was obliged to subsist at the expense of an old aunt who lived at Toledo, and who, loving him as her own son, took care to furnish him with what money he wanted. He went always handsomely dressed, and was perfectly well received every where: he visited the principal ladies of the city, and among others, the Marchioness of Almenara, a widow of

seventy-two years of age, who, by her engaging behaviour and agreeable wit, allured the whole nobility of Cordova to her house. Men as well as women delighted in her conversation, and her family was styled, *the polite company*.

'My master, who was one of the most assiduous visiters of that lady, came home from her house, one evening, with an enlivened look that was natural to him: upon which I said, "Signior, you seem to be strangely elevated; may your faithful servant ask the cause? Hath not something extraordinary happened?" The knight smiled at that question, and owned he was actually engrossed by a serious conversation which he had enjoyed with the Marchioness of Almenara. "I heartily wish," said I, laughing, "that the superannuated toast may have made a declaration of love to you." "Jesting apart," answered he; "know, my friend, that I am really beloved by the marchioness. 'Chevalier,' said she to me, 'I know the smallness of your fortune, as well as the nobleness of your birth: I have an inclination for you, and am resolved to make you easy in your circumstances, by marrying you, as I cannot decently make your fortune any other way. I know very well that this marriage will bring upon me the ridicule of the world; that scandal will be very busy at my expense; and that, in short, I shall pass for an old fool, who must needs have another husband. No matter; I intend to despise slander, in order to make you happy. All that I fear,' added she, 'is, that you may possibly have a reluctance to comply with my intentions.' This," continued the knight, "is the subject of her discourse, which surprised me the more, as she is the most virtuous and prudent woman of Cordova. I answered,

therefore, I was astonished she should do me the honour of offering me her hand; she who had always persisted in the resolution of preserving her widowhood to the last. To this she replied, that having a considerable estate, she should be glad in her lifetime to share it with a man of honour whom she esteemed." "You are then, I suppose," said I, "determined to hazard the leap." "Can'st thou doubt it?" he replied: "the marchioness possesses immense wealth, together with excellent qualities both of the heart and head; and I must have lost my judgment indeed, if I rejected such an advantageous settlement."

'I very much approved of my master's design to lay hold of this fair occasion to make his fortune, and even advised him to push matters, so much was I afraid to see her inclinations change. Luckily, the lady, who had the affair still more at heart than I had, gave such expeditious orders, that the preparations were soon made for her marriage. As soon as it was known at Cordova, that the old Marchioness of Almenara was going to marry young Don Manriquez de Medrano, the wits began to make themselves merry at the widow's expense: but in vain did they exhaust their stock of raillery; they could not divert her from her design; she let the whole city talk, and followed her knight to the altar: their nuptials were celebrated with such splendour as afforded new matter for scandal. "The bride," said they, "might have, at least, for the sake of decency, suppressed all noise and pomp, which but ill becomes old widows who marry young husbands."

'The marchioness, instead of appearing ashamed of being, at her age, wife to the chevalier, indulged herself, without constraint, in the joy

which she felt on this occasion she had a grand entertainment at her house, accompanied by a concert of music, and the feast ended in a ball, at which were present all the nobility of Cordova. Towards the end of the ball, our new married couple slipped off, and met in an apartment, where, being shut up with a waiting-woman and me, the marchioness addressed herself to my master in these words, "Don Manriquez, this is your apartment; mine is in another part of the house: we will pass the night in separate chambers, and in the day we will live together like mother and son." The knight was at first mistaken, and believed that the lady talked thus only to engage him to offer soft violence to her delicacy: imagining, therefore, that he ought, out of pure politeness, to act the passionate lover, he approached her, and eagerly endeavoured to serve her in quality of valet de chambre; but she, far from allowing him to undress her, pushed him away with a serious air, saying, "Hold, Don Manriquez; if you take me for one of those amorous old widows who marry again out of frailty, you are deceived; I did not espouse you to make you buy the advantages which you will reap from our contract of marriage; these are the pure offerings of my heart, and I exact nothing in return but sentiments of friendship." So saying, she left my master and me in our apartment, and retired into her own, with her waiting-maid, absolutely forbidding the chevalier to follow her.

'After her retreat, we remained a good while confounded at what we had heard. "Scipio," said my master, "didst thou ever hear such a discourse as that of the marchioness? What dost thou think of such a lady?" "I think, sir," answered

I, "that she has not her fellow; you are happy in having such a wife, which is like the possession of a benefice without cure of souls." "As for my part," replied Don Manriquez, "I admire a spouse of such an inestimable character, and I intend to compensate, with all imaginable attention, the sacrifice which she makes to her delicacy." Having conversed some time about the lady, we went to rest; I upon a truckle-bed in a wardrobe, and my master in a fine bed prepared for him, where, I believe, at bottom, he was not sorry to lie alone, and to be quit for his fear only.

'The rejoicings began again next day, and the new-married lady appeared in such good humour as to afford scope to the railers. She was the first to laugh at what they said; nay, even excited others to laugh, by receiving their sallies with a good grace. The knight, for his part, seemed no less satisfied with his spouse; and, by the tender glances with which he looked and spoke to her, one would have thought that old age was his taste. This happy couple had in the evening a new conversation, in which it was decided, that, without disturbing one another, they should live, for the future, in the same manner as before marriage: meanwhile, I must do Don Manriquez the justice to say, that, out of consideration for his wife, he did what few husbands would have done in his place: he abandoned a girl in the city, whom he loved, and of whom he was beloved; being resolved, as he said, to maintain no commerce which would seem to insult the delicate conduct of his wife towards him.

'While he gave this old lady such strong marks of gratitude, she repaid them with usury, though she was ignorant of this behaviour; and made him

master of her strong-box, which was even better replenished than that of Velasquez. As she had retrenched her housekeeping during her widowhood, she put it again on the same footing on which it had been in the lifetime of her first husband: she increased the number of her servants, filled her stable with horses and mules; in a word, by her generosity, the chevalier, who was the poorest became the richest knight of Alcantara. You will ask, perhaps, what I got by all this? I received fifty pistoles, from my mistress, and one hundred from my master, who moreover made me his secretary, with an appointment of five hundred crowns; he had even so much confidence in my integrity, that he created me his treasurer.'

'His treasurer!' cried I, interrupting Scipio, with a loud laugh. 'Yes, sir,' he replied, with a dry serious look; 'no less than his treasurer; and I'll venture to say, that I accquitted myself in that employment with honour. True it is, I am perhaps somewhat indebted to cash: for, as I took my wages per advance, and quitted the knight's service suddenly, it is not impossible that I may now be in arrears; at any rate, it is the last reproach that I have deserved, having always acted with probity since that time.

'I was, therefore,' continued the son of Coscolina, 'secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez, who seemed as well satisfied with me as I was with him; when he received a letter from Toledo, importing, that his aunt Donna Thedora Moscoso was at the point of death. He set out instantly to see that lady, who had been a mother to him for many years; and I accompanied him in this journey, together with a valet de chambre and

one lacquey. Being all mounted on the best horses in our stables, we soon got to Toledo, where we found Donna Theodora in such a condition as gave us hopes that she would not die of that distemper; and truly our prognostic, though contrary to that of an old physician who attended her, was verified by the event.

'While the health of our good aunt was re-establishing, less, perhaps, by the remedies she took, than by the presence of her dear nephew, Mr. Treasurer passed his time as agreeably as he could, with young people, whose acquaintance soon introduced him to occasions of spending his money. They sometimes carried me to the tennis-court, where they engaged me in play; and, as I was not so expert a gamester as my master Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. I conceived insensibly an inclination for play; and if I had entirely abandoned myself to that passion, it would, doubtless, have compelled me to take from our cash some quarters of my allowance per advance; but luckily, love saved both my own virtue and my master's money. One day, as I passed by the church de los Reyes, I perceived through a lattice, the curtains of which were withdrawn, a young maid who seemed rather a divinity than a mortal. I would use a term still stronger, if there was any, to denote the impression which she made upon my heart. I made it my business to get information about her; and, by dint of inquiry, learned that her name was Beatrice, and that she was waiting-maid to Donna Julia, second daughter of the Count de Polan.'

Beatrice interrupted Scipio with a loud laugh; then addressing herself to my wife, 'Beautiful Antonia,' said she, 'pray, look steadfastly at me.

Don't you think I have the air of a divinity?' 'You had at that time, in my eyes,' said Scipio to her; 'and since I no longer suspect your fidelity, you seem to me fairer than ever.' My secretary, after such a gallant repartee, pursued his history thus:

'This discovery quite inflamed me; not indeed with a legitimate ardour, for I imagined that I should easily triumph over her virtue, by presents capable of shaking it; but I judged amiss of the chaste Beatrice. In vain did I offer her (by means of mercenary women) my purse and affection; she rejected my proposals with disdain. Her resistance increased my desires. I had recourse to the last expedient, and offered her my hand, which she accepted, when she knew that I was secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez. As we thought it convenient to conceal our marriage for some time, we were wedded privately, in presence of Dame Lorença Sephora, governess of Seraphina, and some other domestics belonging to the Duke de Polan. As soon as I had married Beatrice, she facilitated the means of seeing and conversing with her at night in the garden, in which I introduced myself by a little door, of which she gave me the key. Never were man and wife happier in one another than Beatrice and I. We waited with equal impatience for the hour of rendezvous, ran thither with equal eagerness; and the time which we spent together, though it was sometimes pretty long, seemed but a moment to both.

'One night, which was as fatal to me as the others had been propitious, I was surprised, at entering the garden, to find the little door open. I was alarmed by this uncommon event, from

whence I conceived a bad omen. I grew pale and trembled, as if I had foreseen what was to happen; and advancing in the dark towards the arbour where I used to converse with my wife, I heard the voice of a man. I stopped all of a sudden to listen, and my ear was immediately saluted with these words, "Don't let me languish, then, my dear Beatrice! complete my happiness, and consider that your fortune is connected with it." Instead of having patience to hear him to an end, I thought there was no occasion for knowing more. A jealous fury took possession of my soul; and, breathing nothing but vengeance, I drew my sword, and went hastily into the arbour. "Ah! cowardly seducer!" cried I; "whosoever thou art, thou shalt sooner deprive me of life than rob me of my honour." So saying, I attacked the cavalier who was talking to Beatrice. He put himself immediately into a posture of defence, and fought like a man who understood the art much better than I, who had only received a few lessons at Cordova. Nevertheless, swordsman as he was, I made a push which he could not parry, or rather his foot slipped. I saw him fall; and, imagining that I had wounded him mortally, fled as fast as my legs could carry me, without answering Beatrice, who called me.'

'Yes, really,' said his wife, interrupting him, 'I called in order to undeceive him. The cavalier with whom I conversed was no other than Don Fernando de Leyva. That nobleman, who loved my mistress Julia, had formed a resolution of carrying her off by force, believing it impossible to obtain her by any other means; and I myself had given him a meeting in the garden, to concert with him the steps of that undertaking, on which

he assured me my fortune depended: but in vain did I call my husband; he avoided me as a wife who had been unfaithful to him.'

'My situation at that time was such,' resumed Scipio, 'as rendered me capable of committing any thing. Those who know by experience what jealousy is, and to what extravagance it drives the soundest understandings, will not be surprised at the disorder which it produced in my weak brain. I underwent a momentary transition from one extreme to another. I felt the emotions of hatred succeed those of tenderness, which I had entertained for my wife a moment before, and made an oath to abandon and banish her from my memory. Besides, I thought I had killed a cavalier; and, in that opinion, being afraid of falling into the hands of justice, suffered that inconceivable anxiety which incessantly pursues, like a fury, the man who has done a bad action. In this horrible situation, my whole care being to escape, I did not go home, but instantly quitted Toledo, having no other baggage than the clothes on my back. True, indeed, I had in my pocket sixty pistoles, which were a pretty good resource to a young man who proposed to live all his life in service.

'I walked all night long, or rather ran; for the images of alguazils, which continually haunted my imagination, supplied me still with new vigour, and the morning surprised me between Rodillas and Maqueda. When I arrived at this last town, finding myself a little fatigued, I went into the church, as soon as it was open; and, after having put up a short prayer, sat down upon a bench to rest me. I began to muse upon my present situation, which, heaven knows, was perplexing enough; but I had

no time to make long reflections. I heard the church echo with two or three smacks of a whip, which making me conclude that a carrier was passing, I got immediately to see whether or not I was mistaken; and, by the time I got to the door, perceived one, who being mounted on a mule, led two more in a leash. "Stop, friend," said I to him; "where are those mules a going?" "To Madrid," answered he. "I came hither with two good Dominican monks, and am going back myself."

'The opportunity that offered of travelling to Madrid, inspired me with an inclination to go thither. I made a bargain with the carrier, mounted one of the mules, and we pushed forwards for Illescas, where we were to sleep. Scarce had we got out of Maqueda, when the carrier, who was a man between thirty-five and forty years of age, thundered out church-singing with vast vociferation: he began with the prayers which the canons sing at mattins, then sung the *credo*, as it is sung at high mass; and passing on to vespers, pronounced them, without even sparing the *magnificat*. Although the rogue stunned me with his noise, I could not help laughing, and even encouraged him to continue, when he was obliged to stop and take breath. "Courage, friend!" said I to him; "pray go on: if heaven hath given you good lungs, I see you don't put them to a bad use." "No, indeed," cried he "I am not, thank God, like the most part of carriers, who sing nothing but infamous or impious songs: I would not even repeat ballads made upon our wars with the Moors; for these are things frivolous, if not wicked." "You have," said I, "a purity of heart rarely to be met with among mule

teers: with this extreme delicacy in the choice of your songs, have you likewise made a vow of chastity with regard to the young wenches who live at inns upon the road?" "Certainly," answered he. "Continence is another thing on which I pique myself in these sort of places, where I mind nothing but my mules." I was a little astonished to hear this phœnix of carriers talk in such a manner; and, looking upon him as a man of honesty and discretion, entered into a conversation with him after he had sung his fill.

'We arrived at Illescas in the twilight; where, alighting at an inn, I left the care of the mules to my companion, and went into the kitchen, where I ordered the landlord to procure a good supper. This he promised to do so effectually, that I should remember I had lodged at his house the longest day I had to live. "Ask," said he, "ask your carrier what sort of a man I am. Ecod! I will defy all the cooks of Madrid and Toledo to make an *olla podrida* comparable to those that I compose. I will treat you this night with a ragout of rabbit dressed in my manner, and you shall see whether or not I have reason to boast of my skill." Thereupon, showing me a sauce-pan, wherein there was (as he said) a young rabbit already minced, "There," added he, "is what I intend to give you. When I have once put in some pepper, salt, wine, a handful of sweet herbs, and other ingredients which I use in my sauces, I hope to serve you in a little time with a ragout worthy of a judge."

'The landlord, after having thus sounded his own praise, began to dress supper; and, while it was doing, I went into the hall, where, finding a kind of couch, I lay down to sleep off my fa-

tigue, having had no rest the night before. In two hours the carrier awakening me, said, "Master, your supper is ready; come, if you please, and sit down at table." There was one in another room, with two covers, at which my fellow traveller and I sitting down, the ragout was served. I attacked it with a greedy appetite, and found it of an exquisite relish, whether hunger made me judge too favourably of it, or that my satisfaction was the effect of the cook's skill. We had also a plate of roast mutton; and I remarking that the carrier did honour to this last dish only, asked, why he abstained from the other. He answered, with a smile, that he did not love ragouts. This reply, or rather the smile with which it was accompanied, seemed to me mysterious: "You conceal," said I, "the true reason that hinders you from eating the ragout; pray do me the pleasure of letting me know it." "Since you are so curious to know it," he replied, "I will tell you, that I have loathed all these sorts of ragouts, since, in going once from Toledo to Cuença, they brought me for supper, at an inn, a hashed cat instead of a rabbit, and that gave me a disgust at all fricasees."

'The carrier had no sooner spoke these words, than, in spite of the hunger that devoured me, my appetite forsook me all of a sudden. I took it in my head that I had eaten of a pretended rabbit, and could no longer look at the ragout without making wry faces. My companion did not cure me of this conjecture, when he told me that it was a common thing among the inn-keepers of Spain, as well as the pastry-cooks, to substitute that *quid pro quo*. This discourse, you see, was very consoling; and therefore I had not the least inclination to return to the ragout, nor

even to touch the roast meat, lest the mutton might be as much sophisticated as the rabbit. I rose from table, cursing the ragout, the landlord, and his inn; and, lying down again upon my settee, passed the rest of the night more quietly than I had expected. Next morning early, after having paid the landlord as handsomely as if I had been extremely well treated, I departed from Illescas, my imagination still so full of the ragout, that I fancied every animal which I saw was a cat.

'I arrived in good time at Madrid, where, as soon as I had satisfied my carrier, I hired a small room near the Sun-gate. Mine eyes, though accustomed to quality, were dazzled by the great concourse of noblemen who usually appeared in the court-end of the town. I admired the prodigious quantity of coaches, and the infinite number of gentlemen, pages, and lacquies, who attended the great. My admiration redoubled, when going to the king's levee, I beheld that monarch surrounded by his courtiers. I was charmed at the sight, and said within myself, "I am no longer surprised at what I have heard, that one cannot possibly conceive the magnificence of the court of Madrid, without being an eye-witness of it: I am overjoyed at my coming hither, where, I foresee, I shall be able to do something." All that I could perform, however, was to contract a few unprofitable acquaintances. I gradually spent all my money, and thought myself very lucky in having an opportunity of bestowing myself, with all my merit, upon a pedant of Salamanca, whom a family affair had brought to Madrid, where he was born, and with whom I grew acquainted by

accident. I became his *factotum;* and, when he returned to the university, followed him thither.

'The name of my new patron was Don Ignacio de Ipigna. He assumed the Don, because he had been preceptor to a duke, who, by way of recompense, settled upon him a pension for life; he enjoyed another as *emeritus* professor of the college; and he drew yearly from the public a revenue of two or three hundred pistoles, by the books of dogmatical morality which he printed. The manner in which he composed his works well deserves honourable mention. He spent almost all the day in reading Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, and in writing upon small squares of paper each apophthegm or brilliant thought which he met with. As these squares were filled, he employed me to string them upon wire, in form of a garland, and each garland made a volume. What a world of bad books did we compose! every month almost we finished two volumes, and immediately the press groaned with them. What was most surprising, he published these his compilings as performances entirely new; and if the critics thought proper to upbraid him with having pillaged the ancients, he would answer with the most haughty assurance "*Furto lætamur in ipso.*"

'He was also a commentator; and there was so much erudition in his annotations, that he frequently made remarks on things scarce worthy to be observed; and sometimes wrote upon his paper-squares passages from Hesiod, and other authors, very little to the purpose. That I improved my understanding in the service of this virtuoso, it would be ungrateful in me to deny. I brought my hand-writing to perfection by dint

of transcribing his works; and as, in treating me like a pupil, rather than a valet, he took care to cultivate my capacity, he was also far from neglecting my morals. "Scipio," he would say, when he heard of any piece of knavery committed by a servant, "beware, my child, of following the bad example of that rogue; a valet ought to serve his master with equal fidelity and zeal." In a word, Don Ignacio lost no occasion of inculcating virtue in me; and his exhortations had such good effect, that I was never in the least tempted to play him a trick during the fifteen months which I spent in his house.

'I have already observed, that Dr. de Ipigna was orginally of Madrid, where he had a kinswoman called Catalina, chamber-maid to the prince's nurse. This waiting-maid, who is the same whom I since made use of to procure Signior de Santillane's enlargement from the tower of Segovia, being desirous of doing a good office for Don Ignacio, engaged her mistress to ask a benefice for him from the Duke of Lerma. That minister granted him a nomination to the archdeaconry of Grenada, which, being a conquered country, is in the gift of the king. We set out for Madrid, as soon as we learned this piece of news, the doctor intending to thank his benefactress before he departed to Grenada. I had more than one opportunity of seeing and speaking to Catalina, who was pleased with my easy air and gay disposition. For my part, I found her so much to my liking, that I could not help making suitable returns to the little marks of friendship which she bestowed upon me. In fine, we contracted a mutual attachment. Forgive this confession, my dear Beatrice: as I believed you false, that mistake ought to screen me from your reproaches.

'Meanwhile Dr. Don Ignacio, preparing for his departure to Grenada, his relation and I, frightened at the separation that threatened us, had recourse to an expedient which preserved us from that misfortune. I feigned myself sick, complained of my head and breast, and affected all the symptoms of a most violent distemper. My master called a physician, who having examined me with care, sincerely owned that my distemper was a very serious matter; and that, in all likelihood, I should keep my chamber a long time.

'The doctor, impatient to be at his cathedral, did not think proper to delay his departure, but took another young man into his service, leaving me to the care of a nurse, with whom he deposited a sum of money, to defray the expense of my funeral if I should die, or to recompense my service if I should recover of my disease. As soon as I understood that Don Ignacio was gone, all my complaints vanished. I got out of bed, dismissed my physician who had so much penetration, and got rid of my nurse, who stole more than half of the money with which she had been entrusted in my behalf. While I acted this part, Catalina performed another with her mistress Donna Anna de Guerva, whom, by persuading her that I was admirable in intrigues, she induced to choose me for one of her agents. Madam Nurse, whom her avarice always stimulated to new undertakings, having occasion for such people, received me into her family, and in a little time put my abilities to the proof. She gave me commissions which required some address; and, without vanity, I did not acquit myself amiss: wherefore she was as well pleased with me as I had cause to be dissatisfied with her. This lady was

so covetous, that she would not allow me the least share of the fruits which she reaped from my industry and trouble. She imagined that she acted with great generosity in paying my wages punctually. This excess of avarice would have soon induced me to quit her service, had I not been retained by the affection of Catalina, which kindling every day more and more, she proposed, in a formal manner, that I should take her to wife.

"Softly, my dear," said I; "that ceremony can't be performed between us so soon. I must first be convinced of the death of a young woman who got the start of you, and to whom (for my sins) I am married." "Not you, indeed," replied Catalina; "you only say so to conceal, in a polite manner, the reluctance you have to wed me." In vain did I protest that I spoke the truth. She looked upon my sincere confession as a shift; and, being offended at it, changed her behaviour towards me. We did not quarrel; but our correspondence visibly cooled, and we no longer retained for one another any other sentiments than those of decency and common regard.

'At this juncture, I heard that Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, secretary to the prime-minister of the Spanish monarchy, wanted a lacquey; and this place flattered me the more, as it was represented the most agreeable one that I could possess. "Signior de Santillane," said people to me, "is a person beloved by the duke of Lerma, and of consequence cannot fail of pushing his fortune a great way: besides, he is very generous; so that, in managing his affairs, you will effectually improve your own." I did not neglect this opportunity. I went immediately, and pre-

sented myself to Signior Gil Blas, for whom at first sight I found a growing inclination, and who admitted me into his service on account of my physiognomy. I did not hesitate on quitting the nurse for him; and, if it please Heaven, he shall be my last master.'

Here Scipio finished his history; then addressing himself to me, 'Signior de Santillane,' said he, 'pray witness for me to these ladies, that you have always found me a zealous and faithful servant. I have need of your testimony to persuade them that the son of Coscolina has purged his morals, and that virtuous sentiments have succeeded his vicious inclination.'

'Yes, ladies,' said I, 'this is what I can answer for; if Scipio, in his childhood, was a real *picaro*, he has corrected his conduct so well since that time, that he is now the model of a perfect servant. Far from having cause to blame his behaviour towards me, I must own that I lie under great obligations to him. The night on which I was apprehended to be carried to the tower of Segovia, he saved from pillage and secured a part of my effects, which he might have appropriated to himself with impunity. He not only preserved my money, but also, through pure friendship, came and shut himself up with me in prison, preferring the melancholy pleasure of sharing my sorrows to all the charms of liberty.'

BOOK XI.

CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas is overwhelmed with joy which is disturbed by a melancholy event. Such changes happen at court, as induce Santillane to go thither again.

I HAVE already observed, that there was great harmony between Antonia and Beatrice; the last being used to live like a submissive waiting-woman, and the other habituating herself to act the mistress. Scipio and I were husbands of too much gallantry, and too well beloved by our wives, to be long without children: they grew pregnant almost at the same time. Beatrice, who was the first delivered, brought into the world a girl; and a few days after, Antonia crowned my happiness in bringing forth a boy. I sent my secretary to Valencia with this piece of news for the governor, who came to Lirias with Seraphina, and the Marchioness of Pliego, to stand godmothers to the children, being pleased to add this token of affection to those I had already received. My son, whose godfather and godmother were that nobleman and the marchioness, was christened Alphonso; and my lady governess, willing that I should have the honour of being doubly her gossip, stood with me for Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of Seraphina.

Not only the people of my family were rejoiced at the birth of my son, the inhabitants of Lirias

likewise celebrated it by feasts; which showed that the whole village partook of their master's pleasure. But alas! our rejoicings were not of long duration; or rather, they were all of a sudden converted into groans, complaints, and lamentations, by an event which more than twenty years have not been able to make me forget, and which will ever be present to my thoughts: my son died; and his mother, though safely delivered, soon followed him; a violent fever robbed me of my dear wife, fourteen months after we had been married! Let the reader conceive, if possible, the sorrow with which I was seized. I fell into a state of stupid dejection; and felt my loss so much, that I seemed quite insensible. I was in this condition five or six days, during which I would take no sustenance; and, had it not been for Scipio, I believe I should either have let myself die of hunger, or have lost my reason entirely; but that dexterous secretary found means to beguile my grief, by conforming himself to it; he made me swallow broths, by the art of presenting them with such a mortified look, as if he gave them, not so much with a view of preserving my life, as of nursing my affliction.

This affectionate servant having written to Don Alphonso an account of my misfortune, and the deplorable situation in which I was, that tender and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, repaired immediately to Lirias. I cannot, without being melted, recall the moment in which he presented himself to my view. 'My dear Santillane;' said he, embracing me, 'I am not come hither to console you; I am come to mourn with you for Antonia, as you would mourn with me, had fate robbed me of my Seraphina.' In effect,

he shed tears, and mingled his sighs with mine: so that, overwhelmed as I was with sorrow, I had a lively sense of Don Alphonso's goodness.

This governor having had a long conference with Scipio about the means of vanquishing my grief, they concluded that I must, for some time, be removed from Lirias, where every thing recalled incessantly to my mind the image of my poor Antonia. Upon this, Don Cæsar's son proposed to carry me with him to Valencia, and my secretary seconded him so well, that I yielded to his proposal. I left Scipio and his wife at my house, every part of which, indeed, served only to increase my affliction, and set out with the governor. When I arrived at Valencia, Don Cæsar and his daughter-in-law spared nothing to divert my chagrin; they entertained me by turns with all the amusements that seemed proper to dispel it; but, in spite of all their endeavours, I continued as much as ever plunged in the most profound melancholy. It was not Scipio's fault that I did not resume my tranquillity: he came often from Lirias to Valencia, to know how I was, and returned sad or gay as he perceived me more or less disposed to receive consolation.

One morning, entering my chamber, 'Sir,' said he, with great emotion, 'there is a report in the city which interests the whole kingdom; it is said that Philip the Third is no more, and that the Prince his son is now upon the throne: nay, more,' added he, 'that the Cardinal Duke of Lerma has lost his post; that he is even forbid the court; and that Don Gaspard de Guzman, Count d'Olivarez, is now prime-minister.' I felt myself agitated by this piece of news, without knowing wherefore; and Scipio perceiving it, asked if I was any how

affected by this great change. 'Why should it affect me, my child?' said I; 'I have quitted the court, and ought to look with indifference upon all the changes that can happen there.'

'For a man of your age,' replied the son of Coscolina, 'you are very much detached from the world; were I in your place, I should have a longing desire to go to Madrid, and show my face to the young monarch, to see if he would remember me: this is a pleasure in which I would indulge myself.' 'I understand thee,' said I: 'thou wouldst have me return to court, and try fortune anew, or rather to grow ambitious and covetous again.' 'Why should your morals be corrupted?' answered Scipio: 'have more confidence in your own virtue; I will answer for your conduct; the wholesome reflections which you made upon the court during your disgrace will screen you from the perils of it: re-embark boldly upon a sea, the shelves of which you are so well acquainted with.' 'Peace, flatterer!' said I, interrupting him with a smile; 'art thou tired of seeing me lead a quiet life? I thought thou hadst a greater regard for my repose.'

In this part of our conversation, Don Cæsar and his son coming in, confirmed the news of the king's death, as well as the Duke of Lerma's misfortune; they moreover told me, that this minister having asked leave to return to Rome, it was refused; and he was ordered to repair to his marquisate at Denia: then, as if they had been in concert with my secretary, they advised me to go to Madrid, and present myself to the new king, since I was known to him, and had even done him such service as the great always recompense with pleasure. 'As for my part,' said Don

Alphonso, 'I don't doubt but he will be grateful, and that Philip the Fourth will pay the debts of the Prince of Spain.' 'I am of the same opinion,' said Don Cæsar; 'and look upon Santillane's journey to court as an occasion for him to arrive at great preferment.'

'Truly, gentlemen,' cried I, 'you don't consider what you say; to hear you, one would think I had nothing to do but repair to Madrid, in order to have the golden key, or some government, conferred upon me; you are mistaken; I am, on the contrary, persuaded that the king would take no notice of my person, were I to present myself to his view: but I will do it, if you desire, in order to disabuse you.' The noblemen of Leyva took me at my word, and I could not help promising that I would immediately set out for Madrid. As soon as my secretary saw me determined on the journey, he felt an immoderate joy: he imagined that I should no sooner appear before the new monarch, than that prince would distinguish me in the crowd, and load me with honours and wealth: thereupon, feeding his fancy with the most splendid chimeras, he raised me to the first offices of the state, and preferred himself by the help of my elevation.

I got ready, therefore, to return to court; not with a view of sacrificing again to fortune, but to satisfy Don Cæsar and his son, who imagined that I should soon possess the favour of my sovereign. True it is, I myself felt at bottom some desire of trying if the young prince would know me again: attracted by this emotion of curiosity, without hope or design of reaping any advantage from the new reign, I departed with Scipio for Madrid, leaving the care of my house to Beatrice, who was an excellent economist.

CHAPTER II.

Gil Blas arrives at Madrid, and appears at court; the king remembers and recommends him to his prime-minister. The consequence of that recommendation.

We gained Madrid in less than eight days, Don Alphonso having accommodated us with two of his best horses, that we might make the greater despatch; and we alighted at a furnished house where I lodged before, belonging to Vincent Ferrero, my old landlord, who was very glad to see me again.

As this was a man who piqued himself upon knowing every thing that happened, both at court and city, I asked if there was any thing new. 'A great many things,' answered he: 'since the death of Philip III. the friends and partisans of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma have bestirred themselves to maintain his eminence in the ministry; but their efforts have been ineffectual: the Count d'Olivarez has got the better of them all. It is said, that Spain loses nothing by the change, and that the new prime-minister has a genius of such vast extent, that he is able to govern the whole world: Heaven preserve him! What is certain,' added he, 'is, that the people have conceived the highest opinion of his capacity; and we shall see, in the end, whether the Duke of Lerma's place is well or ill supplied.' Ferrero having thus opened, gave me an account of all the changes which had been made at court since the Count d'Olivarez steered the helm of the monarchy.

Two days after my arrival at Madrid, I went

to court in the afternoon, and put myself in the king's way, as he went into his closet: but he did not look at me. I returned next day to the same place, but was not more fortunate. The third time, he cast his eye upon me as he passed, but seemed to take no notice of my person; whereupon I came to a determination, and said to Scipio, who accompanied me, 'Thou seest that the king does not remember me; or, if he does, has no mind to renew the acquaintance: I believe it will not be amiss for us to set out upon our return to Valencia.' 'Not so fast, sir,' replied my secretary; 'you know better than I, that success at court is only to be obtained by patience: don't cease showing yourself to the prince; by dint of perseverance in appearing before him, you will oblige him to consider you more attentively, and to recognise the features of his agent with the fair Catalina.'

That Scipio might have nothing to reproach me with, I had the complaisance to continue the same conduct during three weeks; and one day, at length, the monarch, struck with my appearance, ordered me to be called in; and I entered his closet, not without great disorder to find myself tete-a-tete with my sovereign. 'Who are you?' said he; 'I remember your face, but cannot recollect where I have seen you.' 'Sir,' answered I, trembling, 'I had the honour to conduct your majesty one night, with the Count de Lemos, to the house of ——' 'Oh! I remember it,' said the prince, interrupting me, 'you was secretary to the Duke of Lerma, and, if I am not mistaken, your name is Santillane. I have not forgot that you served me with abundance of zeal on the occasion, and that you was very ill rewarded

for your pains: was not you imprisoned for that adventure?' 'Yes, sir,' said I; 'I was six months in the tower of Segovia, from whence your goodness delivered me.' 'That,' answered he, 'does not acquit me of the obligation; it is not enough to set you at liberty, I ought to recompense you for the misfortune which you suffered for love of me.'

Just as the prince had pronounced these words, the Count d'Olivarez entered the closet. A favourite takes umbrage at every thing: he was astonished to find a stranger there; and the king redoubled his surprise, in saying to him, 'Count, I recommend this young man to you; employ him in some shape or other, and take care of his advancement.' The minister affected to receive this order with a gracious look, eyeing me from head to foot, and very anxious to know who I was. 'Go, friend,' said the monarch to me, making a sign for me to retire; 'the count will not fail to employ you in an advantageous manner, both for my service and your own interest.'

I immediately quitted the closet, and rejoined the son of Coscolina, who, extremely impatient to know what the king had said to me, remained in the utmost agitation. He asked me forthwith, whether we must return to Valencia or stay at court. 'Thou shalt judge,' said I: then I overwhelmed him with joy, in recounting to him, word for word, the short conversation which I had with the king. 'My dear master,' said Scipio to me, when he heard it, 'will you distrust my almanacs again? Confess that the Lords of Leyva and I were not to blame, in exhorting you to take a trip to Madrid. I already see you in some eminent post; you will become the Calderona of

Count d'Olivarez.' 'That is not at all what I wish,' said I, interrupting him; 'I have no ambition for a place which is environed with so many precipices. I would rather have an employment in which I should have no occasion to do injustice, or carry on a shameful traffic of my prince's favour: after the use I made of my past credit, I cannot be too much upon my guard against avarice and ambition.' 'Come, sir,' replied my secretary, 'the minister will give you some good post, which you may fill without ceasing to be an honest man.'

More urged by Scipio than by my own curiosity, I went next day to the house of Count d'Olivarez before sun-rise; having been informed, that every morning, in summer and winter, he gave audience by candle-light. I modestly took my station in the corner of the hall, from whence I narrowly observed the Count when he appeared; for I had but a superficial view of him in the king's closet: he was taller than the middle-size, and might have passed for a fat man in a country where we see none almost but lean people; his shoulders were so high, that I thought him hunch-backed, though he was not so; his head, which was extremely large, hung down upon his breast; his hair was black and straight, his visage long, his complexion of an olive-colour, his mouth sunk in, and his chin peaked and turned upwards at the end.*

All this together could not make a very handsome appearance; nevertheless, as I believed him to be well disposed towards me, I looked upon him with a favourable eye, and even found him

* It was likely, on account of his disadvantageous figure, that he generally gave audience from his couch, or received people sitting.

agreeable. True it is, he treated every body with an affable and pleasant air, and very graciously received the memorials which were presented to him; and this seemed to supply the place of a good person. Meanwhile, when I advanced in my turn to salute him, and make myself known, he darted a rude and threatening look at me; then turning his back without deigning to hear me, returned into his closet. I then thought him more ugly than he was naturally, went out of the hall very much confounded at such an unfavourable reception, and did not know what to think of the matter.

Having rejoined Scipio, who waited for me at the door, 'Dost thou know,' said I, 'what reception I have met with?' 'No,' answered he; 'but it is not difficult to guess: the minister, ready to conform himself to the pleasure of his prince, has doubtless offered you some considerable employment.' 'There you are mistaken,' I replied; telling him at the same time in what manner I had been received. Having listened attentively, he said, 'The count must have forgot you, or mistaken you for somebody else; I advise you to wait on him again, and I am sure he will treat you with another sort of look.' I followed my secretary's advice, and presented myself the second time before the minister, who treated me still worse than at first, frowned at me as if the sight of me had given him pain, turned his eyes another way, and retired without speaking one word.

I was touched to the quick by his behaviour, and tempted to depart immediately for Valencia: but this Scipio did not fail to oppose, being unwilling to renounce the hopes which he had conceived. 'Dost thou not see,' said I to him, 'that

the count wants to remove me from court? The king has expressed to him some regard for me, and that is sufficient to bring upon me the aversion of his favourite; let us yield, my child, let us yield with a good grace to the power of such a formidable foe.' 'Sir,' answered he, incensed against the Count d'Olivarez, 'I would not so easily quit my ground; I would go and complain to his majesty of the little regard which the minister shows to his recommendation.' 'Bad counsel, my friend,' said I: 'if I should take that imprudent step, I would soon repent it; nay, I believe, I run some risk in tarrying in this city.'

My secretary began to weigh these words; and considering that he had actually to do with a man who might make us revisit the tower of Segovia, he partook of my fear, and no longer opposed my desire of quitting Madrid, from whence I resolved to move the very next day.

CHAPTER III.

Gil Blas is hindered from executing his resolution to leave the court, and receives an important piece of service from Joseph Navarro.

On my return to my lodging I met my old friend Joseph Navarro, clerk of the kitchen to Don Balthazar de Zuniga. I went up to him, saluted him, and asked if he knew me, and if he would still be so good as to speak to a wretch who had repaid his friendship with ingratitude. 'You confess, then,' said he 'that you have not used me

extremely well!' 'Yes,' answered I; 'and you have a right to load me with reproaches: I deserve them all, if I have not already expiated my crime by the remorse which attended it.' 'Since you have repented of your fault,' replied Navarro, embracing me, 'I ought no longer to remember it.' I, on my part, hugged Joseph in my arms; and we resumed our former sentiments to each other.

He had heard of my imprisonment, and the disorder of my affairs, but was ignorant of what followed. I informed him of all, and even recounted to him the conversation I had with the king, not concealing the bad reception I had met with from the minister, no more than my design of retiring again to my solitude. 'Beware of going thither,' said he: 'since our monarch has expressed a friendship for you, it must certainly be of some service. Between you and me, the Count d'Olivarez has a very singular disposition, and is full of whims: he sometimes, as on this occasion, acts in a very unaccountable manner; and nobody but himself has the key of his irregular behaviour. In short, whatever reasons he may have for receiving you in this manner, stick close to the business; he will not hinder you from profiting by the prince's bounty; this is what I assure you: I will mention it this evening to Signior Don Balthazar de Zuniga, my master, who is uncle to the Count d'Olivarez, and shares with him the cares of government.' Navarro having told me this, asked a direction to my lodging; and so we parted.

It was not long before I saw him again. Coming to me next day, 'Signior de Santillane,' said he, 'you have a protector in my master, who will

favour you with his support. On account of the good character which I gave of you, he has promised to speak in your behalf to his nephew the Count d'Olivarez, whom I hope he will prepossess in your favour.' My friend Navarro, who did not serve me by halves, introduced me two days after to Don Balthazar, who said to me, with a courteous look, 'Signior de Santillane, your friend Joseph has spoke so well of you as to engage me in your interests.' I made a profound bow to Signior de Zuniga; and answered, that I should all my life have a lively sense of the obligation I lay under to Navarro, for having procured for me the protection of a minister who was justly styled, 'the light of the council.' Don Balthazar, after this flattering reply, clapped me on the shoulder, saying, with a smile, 'You may go again to-morrow to the levee of the Count d'Olivarez, with whom you will be better satisfied than before.'

I appeared therefore the third time before the prime-minister; who, having distinguished me in the crowd, honoured me with a smiling look, from whence I conceived a good omen. 'This goes well,' said I to myself: 'the uncle has made the nephew hear reason.' I now expected a favourable reception, and my expectation was fulfilled: the count, after having given audience to every body, sent for me to his closet, where he said to me, with a familiar air, 'Friend Santillane, forgive me for having thrown thee into perplexity for my diversion; I pleased myself with giving thee uneasiness, in order to try thy prudence, and see what thou wouldst do in thy chagrin. I don't doubt that thou thought'st I was displeased with thee; but, on the contrary, my child, I own I have a

liking to thy person. Though the king my master had not ordered me to take care of thy fortune, I should have done it through pure inclination. Besides, my uncle, Don Balthazar de Zuniga, to whom I can refuse nothing, has desired me to look upon thee as one for whom he interests himself. this is enough to determine me in thy favour.' This declaration made such a strong impression upon my senses, that they were quite disordered. I threw myself at the feet of the minister; who, having bid me rise, went on in this manner: 'Come hither again this afternoon, and call for my steward, who will impart to thee the orders I shall give him.' So saying, his excellency went out to hear mass, as he usually did every day, after having given audience; and then repaired to the king's levee.

CHAPTER IV.

Gil Blas acquires the love of the Count d'Olivarez.

I DID not fail to return in the afternoon, and call for the steward, whose name was Don Raymond Caporis. I no sooner told him my name, than saluting me with great demonstrations of respect, 'Signior,' said he, 'follow me, if you please: I will conduct you to the apartment which is destined for you in this house.' So saying, he carried me by a little stair to a range of five or six rooms, which composed a second story of one wing of the house, and which were very plainly furnished.

'This,' said he, 'is the lodging which his grace appoints for you; and here you will have a table with six covers, maintained at his expense. You will be served by his own domestics, and there will always be a coach at your command. This is not all,' added he, 'his excellency has ordered me to treat you with the same respect as if you was of the family of Guzman.' 'What the deuce is the meaning of all this?' said I to myself. 'How am I to understand these distinctions? Is there not some mischief at bottom? and is it not for his diversion that the minister gives me such honourable treatment?" While I was in this uncertainty, fluctuating between hope and fear, a page came and told me, that the count wanted me. I went instantly to his grace, who being alone in his closet, 'Well, Santillane,' said he; art thou satisfied with thy apartment, and the orders which I have given to Don Raymond?' 'The goodness of your excellency,' answered I, 'seems to be excessive; and I receive it with fear and trembling.' 'For what reason?' said he. 'Can I do too much honour to a man whom the king has recommended to my care? No, indeed; I do no more than my duty in treating thee in an honourable manner: be not therefore surprised at what I do for thee; and be assured, that a solid and splendid fortune cannot escape thee, provided thou art as much attached to me as thou wast to the Duke of Lerma. But, with regard to that nobleman,' added he, 'I have been told that you lived in great familiarity with him. I am curious to know how you two became acquainted, and what employment you exercised under that minister: disguise nothing; I insist upon hearing the whole truth.' I then remembered my perplexity with the Duke of Lerma

in the same case, and in what manner I extricated myself; and this I practised again very successfully: that is to say, in my narration I softened the rough places, and passed slightly over those things which did not much redound to my honour: I likewise spared the Duke of Lerma; though in doing otherwise, I should have better pleased my hearer. As for Don Rodrigo de Calderona,* I gave him no quarter, but disclosed all the fine strokes which I knew he struck in the traffic of commanderies, governments, and benefices.

'What you tell me of Calderona,' said the minister, interrupting me, 'is conformable to several memorials which have been presented against him, and which contain heads of accusation still more important. His trial will soon come on; and if you wish his downfall, I believe your desire will be satisfied.' 'I don't desire his death,' said I; 'though it was not his fault that I found not mine in the tower of Segovia, where he was the cause of my being imprisoned for a good many months.' 'How!' cried his excellency; 'was Don Rodrigo the cause of thy imprisonment? this is what I did not know. Don Balthazar, to whom

* Rodrigo Calderona was first made gentleman of the bedchamber to the king; then secretary of state; some time after, he received the collar of the order of St. Jago, was made Commander of Arcana, and created Captain of the German guard. Such extraordinary favours he could not support with moderation; but, becoming extremely insolent and licentious, despised the most powerful grandees of Spain, to whose resentment he fell a sacrifice. He was tried in 1619, on an impeachment containing two hundred and fifty articles; among which were sorcery, and poisoning the queen; and though these two were not proved, yet he was condemned to lose his head; which was severed by a stroke upon the throat; none but traitors in Spain receiving it on the neck behind. He died with such courage and decency as affected even his enemies with sorrow and remorse.

Navarro recounted thy history, told me that the late king ordered thee to be confined, as a punishment for having carried the Prince of Spain to a suspected place in the night: but I knew no more of the matter; and I can't conceive what part Calderona could play in the piece.' 'The part of a lover who revenges an injury received,' answered I. I then told him the whole adventure; which he thought so diverting, that, grave as he was, he could not help laughing, or rather weeping with mirth. He was infinitely rejoiced with Catalina, sometimes niece, and sometimes granddaughter, as well as with the part which the duke of Lerma acted in the whole.

When I had finished my narration, the count dismissed me, saying, that he would not fail in finding me some employment next day. I ran immediately to the house of Zuniga, to thank Don Balthazar for his good offices, and to tell my friend Joseph how well I was with the prime-minister.

CHAPTER V.

The private conversation which Gil Blas had with Navarro, and the first business in which he was employed by the Count d'Olivarez.

As soon as I saw Joseph, I told him, with some agitation, that I had a great many things to communicate; upon which he carried me to a private

place, where, after having informed him of what had happened, I asked his opinion of the matter. 'My opinion,' answered he, 'is, that you are in the way of making a vast fortune: every thing smiles upon you; you are agreeable to the prime-minister; and another thing which may turn out to your advantage is, that I can do you the same service which you received from my uncle Melchoir de la Ronda, when you first entered the family of the Archbishop of Grenada. He spared you the trouble of studying the prelate and his principal officers, by disclosing their different characters to you at once: and I will, after his example, make you acquainted with the count, the countess his wife, and Donna Maria de Guzman, their only child.

'The minister has a quick, penetrating genius, capable of forming grand designs. He sets up for a universal man, because he has a small tincture of every science, and believes himself able to decide in every thing. He imagines himself a profound lawyer, a great captain, and a most consummate politician. Add to this, he is so intoxicated with his own opinions, that he always follows them rather than those of others, that he may not seem beholden to the understanding of any man. Between you and me, this defect may have strange consequences; from which Heaven preserve the monarchy! He shines in the council by a natural eloquence; and he would write as well as he speaks, if, in order to dignify his style, he did not affect expressions which render it stiff and obscure. He is, besides, very whimsical, capricious, and chimerical: so much for his head. As to his heart, he is generous and friendly. He is said to be vindictive; but what Spaniard is

otherwise? He is also accused of ingratitude, in being the occasion of exiling the Duke d'Uzeda, and the Friar Lewis Aliaga, to whom, people say, he had great obligations: but this is pardonable; the desire of being prime-minister prevails over every other sentiment.

'Donna Agnez de Zuniga à Velasco, Countess of Olivarez,' continued Joseph, 'is a lady that has no fault that I know, but that of selling her favours at a high price. As for Donna Maria de Guzman, who is, without contradiction, this day the richest match in Spain, she is an accomplished young lady, and the idol of her father. Model your behaviour accordingly; be assiduous in making your court to these two ladies; and appear still more devoted to the Count d'Olivarez than you was to the Duke of Lerma, before your journey to Segovia; in which case, you will certainly become a personage of rank and power.

'I likewise advise you,' added he, 'to wait upon my master Don Balthazar from time to time; though you have no need of him for your advancement, don't neglect him; he has a very good opinion of you at present: preserve his friendship and esteem, which may be of service to you upon some occasion or other.' 'As the uncle and nephew,' said I, 'are both concerned in the ministry, is there no jealousy between the two colleagues?' 'On the contrary,' answered he, 'they live together in the greatest harmony. Had it not been for Don Balthazar, the Count d'Olivarez, perhaps, would not have been prime-minister: for, in short, after the death of Philip the Third, all the friends and partisans of the house of Sandoval exerted themselves very much, some in favour of the cardinal, and others in behalf of his

son; but my master, who was the most subtle among the courtiers, and the count, as cunning as he, broke all their measures, and took such effectual steps to secure that place, that their antagonists were quite foiled. The Count d'Olivarez, when he became minister, shared the administration with his uncle Don Balthazar, to whom he left the care of foreign affairs, reserving all domestic concerns to himself: so that, by these means, strengthening the ties of friendship, which ought naturally to unite persons of the same blood, these two noblemen, independent of one another, live in such good correspondence as to me seems unalterable.'

Such was the conversation I had with Joseph, by whose information I hoped to profit: after which I went to thank Signior de Zuniga for his goodness towards me. He told me very politely, that he would seize every occasion of befriending me, and that he was very glad to find me satisfied with his nephew, to whom, he assured me, he would speak again in my favour; resolving at least, he said, to convince me, that he had my welfare at heart, and that, instead of one patron, I had two. It was thus that Don Balthazar, out of friendship for Navarro, interested himself in my behalf.

That very evening I quitted my hired room, to go and lodge at the prime-minister's house, where I supped with Scipio in my own apartment. There we were served by the domestics of the family; who, while we eat our victuals, with an affected gravity, laughed, perhaps, within themselves, at the respect which they were commanded to show When the table was uncovered, and they were retired, my secretary, laying aside his constraint, said a thousand diverting things, which his gay dis-

position and sanguine hopes inspired. As for me, although overjoyed at the brilliant situation in which I saw myself, I felt myself no longer disposed to be dazzled by it; but, going to bed, slept soundly, without giving way to the agreeable ideas with which I might have entertained my fancy; whereas the ambitious Scipio enjoyed little repose, but passed half of the night in hoarding up money for the portion of his daughter Seraphina.

I had scarce got on my clothes next morning, when I was sent for by his grace; who, when I came before him, said to me, 'Well, Santillane; let us see a specimen of what thou canst do. Thou sayest the Duke of Lerma employed thee in abridging memorials: I have got one, which I intend for thy first essay. The subject of it is this: it must be a performance to prepossess the public in favour of my ministry. I have already privately spread a report, that I found affairs in very great disorder: the business therefore is, to expose to the eyes of both court and city the miserable condition to which the monarchy is reduced. We must, on this subject, draw a picture which will strike the people, and hinder them from regretting the loss of my predecessor. After that, you must extol the measures which I have taken to render his majesty's reign glorious, his dominions flourishing, and his subjects perfectly happy.'

His grace, having spoke in this manner, gave me a paper, containing the just causes the nation had to complain of the preceding administration, summed up in ten articles; the least of which, I remember, was sufficient to alarm all good Spaniards; then shutting me in a closet adjoining to his own he left me to work at liberty. I began to

compose my memorial as well as I could. I first of all described the bad condition of the kingdom, the finances exhausted, the royal revenue engrossed by partizans, and the marine entirely ruined. I then demonstrated the faults committed by those who had governed the state under the last reign, and the terrible consequences which might proceed from these faults. In short, I represented the monarchy in danger, and so sharply censured the former minister, that, according to my memorial, the loss of the Duke of Lerma was a great happiness for Spain. To say the truth, though I harboured no resentment against that nobleman, I was not sorry to do him this good office. Such is the disposition of man!

In fine, after a frightful picture of the misfortunes which threatened Spain, I encouraged the minds of the people, by making them conceive fair hopes of the future. I made the Count d'Olivarez speak like a saviour sent from heaven for the salvation of the state; I promised mountains and miracles; in a word, I entered so well into the views of the new minister, that he seemed surprised at my performance; which when he had read to an end, 'Santillane,' said he, dost thou know that thou hast composed a morsel worthy of a secretary of state? I am not surprised that the Duke of Lerma employed thy pen; thy style is concise, and even elegant; but I think it is a little too natural.' He then pointed out the places which were not to his taste, altering them with his own hand; and I perceived, by his corrections, that he loved (as Navarro had told me) obscure and far fetched expressions. Nevertheless, though he was resolved to have nobleness, or rather conceits, in his diction, he preserved two-thirds of

my work; and, to show how well he was satisfied with my capacity, sent to me, by Don Raymond three hundred pistoles, as a dessert at dinner.

CHAPTER VI.

The use to which Gil Blas puts his three hundred pistoles; and his charge to Scipio: with the success of the above-mentioned memorial.

This favour of the minister furnished Scipio with a new opportunity of congratulating my return to court. 'You see,' said he, 'that fortune has great designs in your favour. Are you now sorry for having quitted your solitude? Long life to the Count d'Olivarez! he is quite another sort of a patron than his predecessor. The duke of Lerma, though you was so much attached to him, allowed you to languish several months, without giving you one pistole; whereas the Count has already bestowed upon you a gratification which you could not have expected till after long service.

'I wish, added he 'that the Lords of Leyva were witnesses of the happiness which you enjoy, or at least made acquainted with it.' 'It is time, indeed, for them to know it,' answered I; 'and I was just going to talk to thee about the matter. I don't doubt that they are extremely impatient to hear from me; but I waited until I should see myself settled in some shape or other, and be able to inform them positively whether or not I

should stay at court. Now that I am fixed, thou mayest set out for Valencia when thou wilt, to inform those noblemen of my present situation, which I look upon as their own work, since it is certain, that had it not been for them, I should never have determined upon my journey to Madrid.' 'My dear master,' cried the son of Coscolina, 'how happy will they be when I recount to them what has happened to you! would I were already at the gates of Valencia! but I shall be there very soon. Don Alphonso's two horses are ready: I will set out immediately with one of his grace's lacquies: for, besides that I shall be glad of a companion on the road, you know people will be dazzled by the livery of the prime minister.'

I could not help laughing at the ridiculous vanity of my secretary, though, vainer still perhaps than he, I let him do as he desired. 'Go,' said I; 'and return as soon as possible; for I have another commission to give thee: thou must go to the Asturias with money for my mother. I have, through negligence, let the time pass, on which I promised to remit a hundred pistoles to her, and which you undertook to deliver with thy own hand. These sort of promises from a son ought to be so sacred, that I upbraid myself with my want of punctuality. 'Sir,' answered Scipio, 'in six weeks I will bring you an account of both these commissions; I will converse with the Lords of Leyva, make a tour to your country-house, and revisit the city of Oviedo, which I never remember without wishing three-fourths and a half of its inhabitants at the devil.' Upon this, I counted out to the son of Coscolina one hundred pistoles for my mother's pension, with a hundred more

for himself, that he might agreeably perform the long journey which he had undertaken.

A few days after his departure, the count sent our memorial to the press; and it was no sooner published than it became the subject of all conversations in Madrid. The people, always friends to novelty, were charmed with the performance. The low ebb of the finances, which was painted in lively colours, incensed them against the Duke of Lerma; and if the strokes of the quill, which that minister received, were not applauded by every body, at least they met with abundance of approbation.

As for the magnificent promises made by the Count d'Olivarez, and, among others, that of defraying the national expense by a prudent economy, without incommoding the subjects, they dazzled the citizens in general, and confirmed them in the grand opinion which they had already entertained of his capacity; so that the whole city echoed with his praise.

That minister, overjoyed to see the accomplishment of his aim, which in that publication had been to acquire the public affection, was resolved to deserve it effectually, by a commendable action, which should be serviceable to the king. For this purpose he had recourse to the invention of the Emperor Galba; that is, to make those who had enriched themselves, the Lord knows how, in the administration of the finances, regorge their wealth. When he had drawn from those leeches the blood which they had sucked, and filled the coffers of the king, he undertook to preserve it, by suppressing all pensions, not even excepting his own, as well as the gratifications that were given out of the king's exchequer. To

succeed in this design, which he could not execute without changing the face of government, he employed me in composing a new memorial, the substance and form of which he dictated. He then enjoined me to rise as much as I could above the ordinary simplicity of my style, and give more dignity to my expressions. 'Enough, my lord,' said I; 'your excellency shall have the *splendid* and *sublime* which you desire.' I shut myself up in the same closet where I had composed the first, and there went to work, after having invoked the eloquent genius of the Archbishop of Grenada.

I began by representing, that we could not be too careful in preserving the money which was in the treasury, and which ought to be employed only in the emergencies of the state, as being a sacred fund, reserved on purpose to keep the enemies of Spain in awe. Then I demonstrated to the king (for the memorial was addressed to him) that, in taking away all the pensions and gratifications with which the revenue was saddled, he could not, for all that, deprive himself of the pleasure of rewarding those subjects who should deserve his favour; since, without touching his treasure, he was in a condition to bestow upon them great recompenses: that for some he has vice-royalties, governments, orders of knighthood, and military employments; for others, commanderies, and pensions upon them, titles, magistracies; and, in fine, all sorts of beneficcs for those who are consecrated to the church.

This memorial, which was much longer than the first, took me up near three days; and luckily I composed it to the taste of my master; who, finding it written with emphasis, and stuffed with

metaphors, loaded me with applause. 'I am very well satisfied with this,' said he, pointing to the most tumid places; 'these are well stamped expressions. Courage, friend; I foresee that thou wilt be of great service to me.' Nevertheless, in spite of the applause of which he was so prodigal, he did not fail to retouch the memorial. He inserted a good deal of his own, and composed a piece of eloquence which charmed the king and the whole court. The city joined its approbation, and conceived a happy omen of the future; and flattered itself, that the monarchy would resume its ancient lustre under the ministry of such a great man.

His excellency, seeing that this piece did him a great deal of honour, was willing that I should reap some fruit from it, in consideration of my own share in the composition; he accordingly bestowed upon me a pension of five hundred crowns upon the commandery of Castile; which was the more agreeable to me, as it was not wickedly though easily got.

CHAPTER VII.

By what accident, in what place, and condition, Gil Blas found his friend Fabricio; and the conversation that passed between them.

Nothing gave more pleasure to the count, than to know the opinion which the people of Madrid had of his conduct in the ministry. He asked me

every day, what people said of him; and even maintained spies, who brought him an exact account of what passed in the city. They reported to him every word which they heard; and, as he ordered them to be sincere, his self-love suffered sometimes: for the people have an intemperance of tongue which has no respect of persons.

When I perceived that he was pleased with these reports, I employed myself every afternoon in going to public places, and joining conversation with good company. When they spoke of the government, I listened with attention; and if they said any thing that deserved to be re-told to his excellency, I did not fail to inform him of it: but it must be observed, that I never reported any thing which was spoke to his prejudice.

One day, as I returned from one of those places, passing by the door of an hospital, I felt an inclination to enter. I walked through two or three wards full of sick people a-bed, and surveyed every thing around me. Among these unfortunate people, whom I could not behold without compassion, I was struck with the appearance of one, who, I believed, was my old friend and comrade Fabricio. That I might have a more distinct view of him, I approached his bed; and, having no longer any reason to doubt that it was the poet Nunnez, stopped a few minutes to consider him, without speaking; while he, recollecting me also, eyed me in the same manner. At length, breaking silence, 'Sure,' said I, 'my eyes deceive me! is this actually Fabricio whom I meet in this place!' 'The very same,' answered he coldly: 'and thou hast no cause to be surprised at it. Since I left thee, I have ever exercised the business of an author: I have composed

romances, comedies, all kinds of works of genius; I have run my race, and am now at the hospital.'

I could not help laughing at these words, and still more at the serious air with which they were pronounced. 'How!' cried I, 'has the Muse brought thee to this place? hath she played thee this villanous trick?' 'Thou seest it is so,' he replied: 'this house is the retreat of many a wit. Thou hast done well, my child, to take another road; but methinks thou art no longer at court, and the face of thy affairs is changed: nay, I remember to have heard that thou wast imprisoned by order of the king.' 'True,' said I, 'the charming situation in which I was, when we parted, in a little time after was followed by a reverse of fortune, which robbed me of my wealth and liberty: nevertheless, my friend, thou seest me again in a more flourishing state than ever.' 'That is impossible!' cried Nunnez; 'thy apparel is frugal and plain; and thou hast not that vain and insolent air which prosperity usually gives.' 'Misfortune,' answered I, 'hath purified my virtue; and I have learned, in the school of adversity, to enjoy riches with moderation.'

'Tell me then,' cried Fabricio, starting up in a transport, 'what may be thy employment? what business dost thou follow? art thou not steward to some ruined grandee, or opulent widow?' 'I have a better post,' I replied; 'but thou must dispense with my telling thee more at present: I will satisfy thy curiosity another time. I will now only let thee know, that I am in a condition to assist thee, or rather, to make thee easy for life, provided thou wilt promise to write no more works of genius, either in verse or prose. Dost thou

find thyself capable of making such a sacrifice to me?' 'I have already made it to heaven,' said he, 'during a severe distemper, of which I am just cured. A Dominican father has made me abjure poetry, as an amusement which, if not criminal, at least diverts the mind from the pursuits of wisdom and virtue.'

'I congratulate thee, my dear Nunnez,' answered I: 'but beware of a relapse.' 'That I am in no fear of,' he resumed: 'I am firmly resolved to abandon the Muses; and, when thou camest into the ward, was just composing an eternal adieu to them in verse.' 'M. Fabricio,' said I, shaking my head, 'I don't know if the Dominican and I dare trust to your abjuration, you seem so furiously enchanted by these learned damsels.' 'No, no!' answered he; 'I have broke off all connexion with them; nay, more, I have conceived an aversion for the public, who does not deserve that authors should consecrate their works to it; I should be sorry if I could produce any thing that would please it. Don't imagine,' continued he, 'that this language is dictated by passion: I speak in cold blood. I equally despise the applause and hisses of the public, which one does not know how to manage. It is so capricious, that it does not think two days one way. What fools are those dramatic writers who are vain of the success of their performances! Whatever noise they make by their novelty, if they are brought upon the stage twenty years after, they are for the most part very ill received. The present generation taxes the past with want of taste, and its determinations are contradicted by those of the next; from whence I conclude, that those authors who are now applauded, will be hissed by posterity.

It is the same thing with regard to romances, and other amusing books, which, though at first they meet with general approbation, insensibly sink into contempt. That honour, therefore, which we reap from the good success of our works, is nothing but a chimera, an illusion of the brain, a fire of straw, which evaporates in smoke.'

Though I was well convinced that the Asturian poet spoke this from passion only, I did not seem to perceive it; but said to him, 'I am overjoyed to find thee disgusted with the belles lettres, and radically cured of the rage of writing. Be assured that I will immediately procure for thee an employment in which thou mayest enrich thyself, without being at a great expense of genius.' 'So much the better!' cried he. 'Genius stinks in my nostrils, and I now look upon it as the most fatal present that heaven can bestow upon man.' 'I wish, my dear Fabricio,' I replied, 'that thou mayest still preserve these sentiments. If you persist in your resolution to quit poetry, I repeat it, I will soon procure for thee an honourable and lucrative post; but until I can do thee this service,' added I, giving him a purse of sixty pistoles, 'pray accept this small token of friendship.'

'O generous friend!' cried the son of Barber Nunnez, transported with gratitude and joy; 'what thanks do I owe to heaven for bringing thee into this hospital, which I will leave this very day by thy assistance!' And he actually ordered himself to be transported into a hired lodging; but, before we parted, I told him where I lived, and invited him to come and see me, as soon as he should be perfectly recovered. He seemed extremely surprised, when I told him that I lodged in the house of the Count d'Olivarez. 'Thrice

happy Gil Blas,' said he, 'whose fate it is to be a minister's favourite! I rejoice at thy good fortune, since thou usest it so well.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Gil Blas becomes more and more beloved by his master. Scipio returns to Madrid, and gives an account of his journey to Santillane.

The Count d'Olivarez, whom henceforth I shall call the count-duke, because the king was pleased about this time to honour him with that title, had a foible which I discovered very much to my own advantage; and this was a desire of being beloved. As soon as he perceived that any one attached himself to him through inclination, he immediately conceived a friendship for that adherent.

I took care not to neglect this observation. I was not contented with barely doing what he commanded; I executed his orders with such demonstrations of zeal as quite won his heart. I studied his taste in all things, that I might conform myself to it; and anticipated his desires as much as I could.

By this conduct, which seldom fails of success, I insensibly became the favourite of my master; who, on his part, as I myself had the same foible, gained my whole soul, by the marks of affection which he bestowed upon me; and I insinuated myself so far into his favour, that I at length shared

his confidence with Signior Carnero, his chief secretary.

Carnero had practised the same method of being agreeable to his excellency; and succeeded so well that he was intrusted with the mysteries of the cabinet. That secretary and I were the two confidants of the prime-minister, and the depositories of his secrets; with this difference, that he spoke to Carnero of nothing but state affairs, and conversed with me on his own private concerns only: by these means making as it were two separate departments, with which we were both equally satisfied, we lived together without jealousy, as without friendship. I had cause to be pleased with my situation, which giving me continual opportunities of being with the count-duke, I was always at hand to observe the very bottom of his soul; which he, though naturally dissembling, ceased to conceal from me, when he no longer doubted the sincerity of my attachment.

'Santillane,' said he to me one day, 'thou hast seen the Duke of Lerma enjoy an authority which looked more like the power of an absolute monarch than that of a favourite minister: nevertheless, I am still more lucky than he was, even at the highest point of his fortune. He had two formidable enemies in the Duke d'Uzeda, his own son, and in the confessor of Philip the Third; whereas I see not one person near the king, who has credit enough to hurt me, nor even one whom I suspect to be my foe.

'It is true, indeed,' continued he, 'that when I came to the ministry, I suffered none to be near the prince, but those who were connected with me, either by blood or friendship. I have by vice-royalties or embassies got rid of all those

noblemen who, by their personal merit, might have acquired some portion of my sovereign's favour, which I was resolved entirely to possess: so that I may now safely say, no great man takes umbrage at my credit. Thou seest, Gil Blas,' added he, 'that I disclose my heart to thee. As I have reason to think thee entirely devoted to me, I have chosen thee for my confidant. Thou dost not want understanding; art, I believe, modest, prudent, and discreet; in a word, thou seemest proper for executing twenty sorts of commissions, which require a young man of extensive understanding, who is at the same time in my interests.'

I was not proof against the flattering images which these words raised in my imagination. Some vapours of avarice and ambition mounted into my brain, and awaked in me those sentiments over which I thought I had gained a complete triumph. I protested to the minister, that I would answer his intentions with all my power; and I kept myself ready to execute, without scruple, all the commissions with which he should think proper to entrust me.

While I was thus disposed to raise new altars to Fortune, Scipio, returning from his journey, said, 'I have not a tedious narration to make. The Lords of Leyva were charmed when I told them the reception you met with from the king, when he knew you, and with the behaviour of the Count d'Olivarez.'

Here I interrupted Scipio, saying, 'You would have given them still more pleasure, my friend, could you have told them on what footing I am now with his grace. The rapidity of the progress which I have made in his excellency's heart since

thy departure is altogether prodigious.' 'God be praised, my dear master!' answered he; 'I foresee that a splendid destiny awaits us.' 'Let us waive this subject,' said I, 'and talk of Oviedo. Thou hast been at the Asturias? in what condition didst thou leave my mother?' 'Ah, sir!' he replied, assuming all of a sudden a melancholy look, 'I have nothing but afflicting news for you from that quarter.' 'O heaven!' cried I, 'my mother is certainly dead.' 'Six months ago,' said my secretary, 'the good lady paid the tribute of nature, as well as your uncle Signior Gil Perez.'

I was deeply affected with my mother's death, although in my infancy I had never received from her those caresses which are necessary to make children grateful in the sequel. I likewise paid those tears which I owed to the good canon, for the care he had of my education. My grief, indeed, did not last long, but soon mellowed into a tender remembrance, which I have always preserved of my parents.'

CHAPTER IX.

How and to whom the count-duke married his only daughter, with the bitter fruits which that marriage produced.

Soon after the return of Coscolina's son, the count-duke fell into a profound reverie, in which he remained for the space of eight whole days.

I imagined that he was meditating some great stroke of politics, but the subject of his musing regarded his own family only. 'Gil Blas,' said he to me one afternoon, 'thou must have perceived that I am a good deal perplexed in mind. Yes, my child, I am wholly engrossed by an affair upon which the repose of my life depends; and I will impart the secret to thee.

'Donna Maria, my daughter,' continued he, 'is now marriageable; and her heart is disputed by a great number of noblemen. The Count de Niebles, eldest son of the Duke de Medina Sidonia, chief of the family of Guzman; and Don Lewis de Haro, eldest son of the Marquis de Carpio and my own sister; are the two candidates who seem best entitled to the preference; especially the last, who possesses merit so much superior to that of his rivals, that all the court persuade themselves I shall make choice of him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, without entering into the reasons which I have to exclude him, as well as the Count de Niebles, I will tell thee, that I have cast my eyes on Don Ramires Nunnez de Guzman, Marquis de Toral, and chief of the family of Guzman d'Abrados: to this young nobleman, and the children which he shall have by my daughter, I intend to leave my whole estate annexed to the title of Count d'Olivarez, to which I will join the quality of grandee; so that my grand-children and their descendants, proceeding from the branch d'Abrados and that of Olivarez, will pass for the eldest of the Guzman family.

'Well, Santillane,' added he, 'dost thou not approve of my design?' 'Pardon me, sir,' answered I, 'the prospect is worthy of the genius

that formed it, I am only afraid that the Duke de Medina Sidonia will murmur at it.' 'Let him murmur, if he pleases,' resumed the minister; 'I shall give myself very little trouble about that. I don't love his branch, which hath usurped the birth-right and titles thereunto attached over the house of Abrados. I shall mind his complaints less than the chagrin of my sister the Marchioness de Carpio, in seeing her son disappointed in his expectation of my daughter. But, after all, I intend to please myself, and it is already decided that Don Ramires shall prevail over all his rivals.'

The count-duke, having taken this resolution, gave a new mark of his singular policy, in putting it in practice. He presented a petition to the king, begging that he and the queen would be pleased to bestow his daughter in marriage, describing the characters of the noblemen who were in pursuit of her, and leaving the choice entirely to their majesties; but he did not fail, in speaking of the Marquis de Toral, to show that he was the most agreeable of them all. Whereupon the king, who had a blind complaisance for his minister, returned this answer:

'I BELIEVE Don Ramires Nunnez worthy of your daughter Donna Maria; nevertheless, take your own choice. The match which will suit you best will be the most agreeable to me.

'THE KING.'

The minister affected to show this answer; and pretending to look upon it as his prince's order, made haste to marry his daughter to the marquis de Toral: an event that very much displeased the Marchioness de Carpio, as well as the Guzmans,

who had flattered themselves with the hope of espousing Donna Maria. Nevertheless, as they could not hinder the marriage, they affected to celebrate it with great demonstrations of joy. One would have thought that the whole family was charmed with the occasion; but the malecontents were soon revenged in a manner very melancholy for the count-duke. Donna Maria* in ten months brought forth a daughter, which died in the birth, and in a few days after fell herself a victim to death. What a loss was this for a father, who, to use the expression, had no eyes but for his daughter; and who saw in this event the miscarriage of his design, of taking the right of eldership from the branch of Medina Sidonia! He was so much affected, that for some days he shut himself up, and would see nobody but me, who, conforming myself to his immoderate grief, seemed as much afflicted as he. To tell the truth, I made use of this occasion to shed fresh tears to the memory of Antonia. The resemblance which her death had to that of the Marchioness de Toral, burst open again the wound which was but imperfectly cured, and renewed my affliction so much, that the minister, overwhelmed as he was with his own sorrow, could not help being struck with mine. He was astonished to see me enter so warmly into his chagrin. 'Gil Blas,' said he one day, perceiving me plunged in the most melancholy sadness, 'it is a sweet consolation for me to have such a sympathizing confidant!' 'Ah, my lord,' answered I, giving to him all the

* Mr. Le Sage has here deviated from the true history, for Donna Maria died unmarried, after having been betrothed to Raymond du Guzman, Marquis de Toral, afterwards created Duke de Medina de las Torres.

honour of my affliction, 'I must be very ungrateful and hard-hearted indeed, if I did not sincerely sympathize with your grace. How can I consider that you mourn the loss of a daughter of accomplished merit, whom you tenderly loved, without mingling my tears with yours! No, my lord; I am so sensible of your goodness, that, as long as I live, I shall always share in your pain as well as pleasure.'

CHAPTER X.

Gil Blas by accident meets the poet Nunnez, who tells him that he has composed a tragedy, which is immediately to be represented on the Prince's theatre. The bad success of that piece, with the surprising good luck which attended its fall.

The minister began to be consoled, and I of consequence to resume my good-humour, when one evening I went out alone to take the air in my coach, and met in my way the Asturian poet, whom I had not seen since he quitted the hospital. He being very well dressed, I took him into the coach, and we drove together to St. Jerome's Meadow.

'Mr. Nunnez,' said I to him, 'I think myself very lucky in having met you by chance, otherwise I should not have had the pleasure.' 'No reproaches, Santillane,' said he with precipitation; 'I sincerely own that I had no intention to

visit thee; and thou shalt hear the reason. You promised me a good post, provided I should abjure poetry; and I have found a very substantial one on condition that I make verse. I have accepted this last, as most suitable to my humour. A friend of mine has introduced me into the family of Don Bertrand Gomez de Ribero, treasurer of the king's gallies. This Don Bertrand, who wants to have a wit in his pay, finding my versification very brilliant, has chosen me preferably to five or six authors who offered themselves candidates for the employment of his private secretary.'

'I am very glad to hear it, my dear Fabricio,' said I; 'for that Don Bertrand is in all appearance very rich.' 'Rich!' answered he; 'they say he has such immense wealth, that he cannot count it. Be that as it will, my office is this: as he piques himself upon being gallant, and would pass for a man of genius, he keeps a literary correspondence with several very sprightly ladies, and I lend him my pen to compose billets filled with wit and humour. I write for him, in verse to one, in prose to another, and sometimes in person carry the letters to show the multiplicity of my talents.'

'But thou hast not told me,' said I, 'what I chiefly desire to know; art thou well paid for thy epistolary epigrams?' 'Very largely,' he replied. 'Rich people are not always generous, and I know some of them who are mere scrubs; but Don Bertrand uses me very nobly. Over and above two hundred pistoles of fixed wages, I frequently receive from him small gratifications, which put me in a condition to act the gentleman, and pass my time agreeably with some authors, who are,

like me, enemies to care.' 'But,' I resumed, 'has thy treasurer taste enough to relish the beauties of a work of genius, and to perceive its faults?' 'Not at all,' answered Numez; 'though he can talk speciously, he is by no means a connoisseur. He gives himself out, however, for another Tarpa,* decides boldly, and supports his opinion with such loudness and obstinacy, that generally, when he disputes, his antagonist is obliged to yield, in order to avoid the shower of ill language with which he is wont to overwhelm his opponents.

'Thou mayest well believe,' pursued he, 'that I am very cautious of contradicting him, whatever cause he gives me for so doing; for, besides the disagreeable epithets which I should certainly bring upon myself, I might possibly be turned out of doors. I therefore prudently applaud what he praises, and disapprove of every thing which he condemns. By this complaisance, which costs me nothing, because I possess the art of accommodating myself to the characters of those who can befriend me, I have gained the friendship and esteem of my patron. He has engaged me to compose a tragedy on a subject which he suggested. I have accordingly finished it under his eye; and if it succeeds, I shall owe one part of my glory to his good advice.'

I asked the title of his tragedy, and he told me it was called, the Count de Saldagne; informing me, at the same time, that it would be represented in three days on the Prince's theatre. 'I wish,' answered I, 'that it may have a great run; and I have such a good opinion of thy genius as to

* Sp. Metius Tarpa, a famous critic of the Augustan age: his tribunal was in the temple of Apollo, where he sat with four colleagues to judge the merit of all theatrical performances, before they were exhibited on the stage

hope it will.' 'I hope so too,' said he; 'but there is no dependence upon such hope, so uncertain are authors of the event of a dramatic piece.' At length the first day of its representation arrived; and as I could not go to the play, being hindered by a commission I had to perform for his grace, all that I could do was to send Scipio thither, that I might at least know that very evening the success of a performance in which I interested myself. After having waited with impatience, I saw him return with a look from which I conceived a bad omen. 'Well,' said I, 'how hath the Count de Saldagne been received by the public?' 'Very brutally,' answered he; 'never was a piece more barbarously used. I came away incensed at the insolence of the pit.' 'And I,' said I, 'am incensed at the fury of Nunnez in composing plays. Must he not have lost his judgment entirely, to prefer the ignominious shouts and hisses of an audience to the happy lot which I could have procured for him?' Thus through friendship did I inveigh against the Asturian poet, and afflicted myself at the misfortune of his piece, while he exulted in the event.

Two days after he actually came to my house in a transport of joy. 'Santillane,' cried he, 'I am come to share with thee the extreme pleasure which I feel! In composing a bad play, my friend, I have made my fortune. Thou knowest the strange reception which the Count de Saldagne met with; all the spectators exclaimed against him as if for a wager, and to that general exclamation I owe my good fortune.'

Astonished to hear the poet Nunnez talk in that manner, 'How, Fabricio!' said I, 'is it possible that the fall of thy tragedy can justify thy im-

moderate joy!' 'Yes, sure,' answered he; 'I told thee before that Don Bertrand had inserted some of his own composition in my piece, which of consequence he thought excellent. He was violently piqued to find the spectators of a different opinion, and this morning said to me, "Nunnez, *Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni:* if the public is displeased with thy production, in recompense, it pleases me, and that is enough. To console thee for the bad taste of the age, I will give thee two thousand crowns a year on my estate; let us go instantly to my notary, and have the deed drawn." We went thither accordingly, the treasurer has signed the deed, and paid me the first year advance.'

I congratulated Fabricio on the unhappy fate of the Count de Saldagne, since it had turned out so much to the author's advantage. 'Thou hadst reason,' continued he, 'to compliment me on the occasion; how happy am I in having been soundly hissed! If the public had been kind enough to honour me with applause, what service should I have received from it? Nothing of consequence; I should have got but a very moderate sum for my labours, whereas its hisses have all of a sudden made me easy for life.'

CHAPTER XI.

Santillane obtains an employment for Scipio, who departs for New Spain.

Mr secretary could not without envy look upon the unexpected good fortune of the poet Nunnez,

which was the sole object of his discourse during eight whole days. 'I admire,' said he, 'the caprice of fortune, that sometimes delights in loading a detestable author with wealth, while she leaves men of genius in misery: I wish she would take it in her head to enrich me also in the space of one night.'—'That may very well happen,' said I, 'and much sooner than you imagine. Thou art here in her temple; for I think we may call the prime-minister's house the temple of fortune, where favours are often bestowed which all of a sudden enrich those who obtain them.'—'That is true, sir,' answered he; 'but they must be waited for with patience.'—'Once more, Scipio,' said I, 'make yourself easy; perhaps you are on the point of having some good post.' A few days after, an opportunity actually offered of employing him advantageously in the service of the count-duke, and I did not let it escape.

Discoursing one morning with Don Raymond Caporis, steward of the prime-minister, our conversation turned upon his excellency's revenues. 'His grace,' said he, 'enjoys the commanderies of all the military orders, which are worth forty thousand crowns per annum, and he is obliged to wear the cross of Alcantara only. Besides, his three posts of great chamberlain, master of the horse, and grand chancellor of the Indies, bring in two hundred thousand more; and all that is nothing in comparison to the immense sums which he draws from America. I will tell you how: when the king's ships set sail from Seville or Lisbon for that country, he embarks on board of them wine, oil, and corn, which his estate of Olivarez affords, and he pays no duty. He sells these commodities in the Indies for four times

the price which they would yield in Spain, then employs the money in purchasing spices, colours, and other things, which are bought for almost nothing in that new world, and afterward are sold at a high rate in Europe. He has already got many millions by this traffic, without doing the least prejudice to the king. What will most surprise you,' continued he, 'is, that the people employed in transacting this commerce always return enriched, the count allowing them to take care of their own fortune, while they manage his.'

Coscolina's son, who listened to our discourse, could not hear Don Raymond talk thus, without interrupting him. 'Zooks! Signior Caporis, I should be glad to be one of these people, for I have long wished to see Mexico.'—'Your curiosity will soon be satisfied,' said the steward to him, 'if Signior de Santillane has no objection to your desire. Though I am very nice in the choice of those whom I send to the Indies on this employment, (for I choose them all) I will, without hesitation, insert you in my register, if your master desires it.'—'You will oblige me in so doing,' said I to Don Raymond; 'pray, give me that mark of your friendship. Scipio is a young man whom I love; besides, he has a great deal of understanding, and will behave in an irreproachable manner. In a word, I can answer for him as for myself.'

'If that be the case,' resumed Caporis, 'let him repair immediately to Seville; the ships will sail for the Indies in a month. He shall have a letter from me at his departure, for a man who will give him all necessary instructions to enrich himself, without prejudicing the interests of his excellency, which must ever be looked upon as sacred.'

Scipio, charmed with this employment, made haste to set out for Seville, with a thousand crowns which I gave him, to buy wine and oil in Andalusia, and put him in a condition to trade in the Indies on his own bottom. Nevertheless, glad as he was to make a voyage by which he hoped to profit so much, he could not leave me without shedding tears, and I could not behold his departure with indifference.

CHAPTER XII.

Don Alphonso de Leyva comes to Madrid; the motive of his journey. Gil Blas is afflicted at the cause, but rejoices at the consequence of it.

Scipio was scarce gone, when a page belonging to the minister brought to me a billet containing these words: 'If Signior de Santillane will give himself the trouble to call at St. Gabriel's Head in Toledo Street, he will there see one of his best friends.'—'Who can this anonymous friend be?' said I to myself: 'Why does he conceal his name? He wants, I suppose, to give me the pleasure of surprise.' I went out immediately to Toledo Street, and going to the appointed place, was not a little astonished to see Don Alphonso de Leyva. 'Are you here, my lord!'—'Yes, my dear Gil Blas,' answered he, hugging me in his arms, 'it is Don Alphonso himself whom you see.'—'What brings you to Madrid?' said I. 'I will both surprise and afflict you,' he replied, 'in telling the cause of my journey. I am deprived of the government of

Valencia, and the prime-minister has ordered me to court, to give an account of my conduct.' I remained a whole quarter of an hour mute and thunderstruck; then recovering myself, asked what he was accused of. 'I know nothing of the matter,' answered he, 'but impute my disgrace to a visit which I made about three weeks ago to the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, who has been a month confined to his castle of Denia.'

'O! truly,' said I, interrupting him, 'you have reason to attribute your misfortune to that indiscreet visit; you need seek for the cause of it no where else; and give me leave to say, you did not consult your usual prudence, when you went to visit the disgraced minister.'—'The error is now committed,' said he; 'and I have taken my resolution with a good grace. I will retire with my family to the castle of Leyva, where I will spend the rest of my days in profound peace. All that gives me concern, is my being obliged to appear before a haughty minister, who may possibly treat me uncivilly; a sufficient mortification to a Spaniard! nevertheless it must be borne; but before I would make this submission, I was willing to speak with you.'

'My lord,' said I, 'don't present yourself before the minister until I know what you are accused of: perhaps the evil is not without remedy. Be that as it will, you must allow me, if you please, to exert myself in your favour as much as gratitude and friendship require.' So saying, I left him at the inn, assuring him that he should hear from me soon.

As I had not meddled in state-affairs since the two memorials, of which eloquent mention has been made, I went to Carnero, and asked if it

was true that the government of Valencia had been taken from Don Alphonso de Leyva. He answered in the affirmative, but said he was ignorant of the cause. Upon this I formed a resolution, without hesitation, to address myself to his grace, that I might learn from his own mouth what cause he had to complain of Don Cæsar's son.

I was so much penetrated with this troublesome event, that I had no occasion to affect a melancholy look to appear afflicted in the eyes of the count-duke. 'What is the matter, Santillane?' said he, as soon as he saw me; 'I perceive an impression of sorrow on thy countenance, and even the tears ready to drop from thine eyes: has any body injured thee? Speak, and thou shalt be revenged.'—'My lord, answered I, weeping, 'I could not conceal my sorrow from you if I would: I am quite in despair, being told that Don Alphonso de Leyva is no longer governor of Valencia; for I could not have heard a piece of news that would affect me more.'—'What sayest thou, Gil Blas?' replied the minister, astonished; 'what concern canst thou have with that Don Alphonso and his government?' I then gave him a detail of all the obligations I lay under to the lords of Leyva; and afterward recounted in what manner I had obtained from the Duke of Lerma the government in question for Don Cæsar's son.

When his excellency had heard me to an end, with an attention full of kindness for me, he said, 'Dry up thy tears, my friend. I not only was ignorant of what thou hast told me, but own also that I looked upon Don Alphonso as a creature of the Cardinal of Lerma: put thyself in my place; would not the visit which he made to his

eminence make thee suspect him? I am willing to believe, however, that having received his employment from the cardinal, he took that step out of pure gratitude. I am sorry for having displaced a man who owed his post to thee; but if I have destroyed thy work, I can repair it. I will even do more for thee than the Duke of Lerma did; thy friend Don Alphonso was no more than governor of the city of Valencia, and I will make him viceroy of the kingdom of Arragon: thou mayest go and inform him of this piece of news, and desire him to come and take the oaths.'

When I heard these words, I passed from the extremity of grief to an excess of joy, which disturbed my intellects so much, that my disorder appeared in the compliment of thanks which I made to his grace, who was not, however, displeased at my confusion. But when I told him that Don Alphonso was already at Madrid, he said I might introduce him that very day. I ran immediately to the St. Gabriel, where Don Cæsar's son was overjoyed to hear of his new employment: he could scarce believe what I said, so improbable did it seem to him, that the minister, whatever friendship he had for me, was capable of bestowing vice-royalties on my recommendation. I conducted him to the count-duke, who received him very politely, and told him, he had behaved so well in his government of the city of Valencia, that the king, thinking him qualified to fill a higher place, had named him to the vice-royalty of Arragon. 'Besides,' added he, 'that dignity is not above your birth; and the nobility of Arragon cannot murmur at the choice of the court.'

His excellency made no mention of me, and the public never knew the part which I acted in this affair: a circumstance that saved Don Alphonso and the minister a great many satirical remarks that people might have passed upon a viceroy of my own making.

As soon as Don Cæsar's son was certain of the place, he despatched an express to Valencia to inform his father and Seraphina of his good fortune, and they soon came to Madrid: their first care was to find me; and overwhelm me with thanks. What a moving and glorious sight was it for me, to see myself embraced with eagerness by the three persons in the world whom I loved most! As sensible of my zeal and affection as the honour which the post of viceroy did to their family, their expressions of gratitude to me were infinite: they even spoke to me as to one of their own rank: they seemed to have forgot that I was their servant; and thought they could never enough manifest their friendship. To suppress useless circumstances, Don Alphonso having received his letters-patent, thanked the king and his minister, and having taken the usual oaths, set out with his family from Madrid, to go and fix his abode at Saragossa*, where he made his entrance with all possible magnificence; and the Arragonians showed by their acclamations that they were very well pleased with the viceroy whom I had set over them.

* Saragossa, formerly Cæsarea Augusta, a fine large city, and the capital of Arragon, in Spain, surrounded with old walls, and other antique fortifications, at the confluence of the rivers Ebro, Galleyo, and Guerva, which run in a serpentine manner through the neighbourhood, rendering it very fruitful. It has an archbishop, sovereign council, and is the seat of a university and inquisition.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gil Blas meets Don Gaston de Cogollos and Don Andrea de Tordesillas at the palace. The conclusion of the story of Don Gaston and Donna Helena de Galisteo. Santillane does an important piece of service to Tordesillas.

I SWAM in joy for having so luckily changed a displaced governor into a viceroy: even the lords of Leyva were less pleased at it than I was. I soon had another opportunity of employing my credit for a friend; which I think I should relate, to persuade the reader that I was no longer the same Gil Blas who sold the favour of the court under the preceding ministry.

Being one day in the king's antichamber, discoursing with noblemen, who, knowing my situation with the prime-minister, did not disdain my conversation; I perceived in the crowd Don Gaston de Cogollos, that state-prisoner whom I had left in the tower of Segovia, and the keeper Don Andrea de Tordesillas along with him. I immediately quitted my company to go and embrace these two friends, whom, if they were astonished to see me there, I was still more so to meet in that place. After some warm hugs on both sides, Don Gaston said to me, 'Signior de Santillane, we have a world of questions to ask mutually, and this is not a convenient place for that purpose: allow me to conduct you to a house where Signior de Tordesillas and I will be glad to have a long conversation with you.' I consented to this proposal: we squeezed through the crowd,

and going out of the palace, found Don Gaston's coach waiting for us in the street; we went into it all three, and were driven to the great market-place where the bull-fights are performed, and there Cogollos lived in a very handsome house. 'Signior Gil Blas,' said Don Andrea, when we were set in a hall magnificently furnished, 'at your departure from Segovia you seemed to hate the court, and to be resolved to remove from it for ever.—'That was actually my design,' answered I; 'and so long as the late king lived, I did not change my sentiments; but when I understood that the prince his son was on the throne, I was willing to see if the new monarch would know me again; he did recollect me, and I had the good fortune to be favourably received: he himself recommended me to the prime-minister, who has conceived a friendship for me, and with whom I am in still greater favour than ever I was with the Duke of Lerma. This, Signior Don Andrea, is what I had to tell you. Now, pray, let me know if you are still keeper of the tower of Segovia.'—'No, indeed,' he replied: 'the count-duke has put another in my place, in all probability believing me wholly devoted to his predecessor.'—'And as for me,' said Don Gaston, 'I was set at liberty for a quite contrary reason. The prime-minister no sooner learned that I was imprisoned at Segovia by the Duke of Lerma's order, than he ordered me to be discharged: it now remains, Signior Gil Blas, to inform you of what has happened to me since I have been enlarged.

'The first thing I did,' continued he, 'after having thanked Don Andrea for his kindness to me during my confinement, was to repair to

Madrid, and present myself before the Count-Duke d'Olivarez, who said to me, "Don't be afraid that the misfortune which hath happened to you will in the least prejudice your reputation: you are now fully justified; and I am the more convinced of your innocence, because the Marquis of Villareal, whose accomplice you were suspected to be, was not guilty; for though he is a Portuguese, and even related to the Duke of Braganza, he is not so much in his interests as in those of the king my master. Your intimacy with that marquis is therefore no reproach upon you; and, in order to repair the injustice which you suffered, in being accused of treason, the king has bestowed upon you a lieutenancy in the Spanish guards." I accepted the commission, begging that his excellency would allow me, before I should enter upon my duty, to go to Coria and visit my aunt Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla. The minister gave me leave for a month, and I set out, accompanied by one lacquey only. We had already passed Colmenar, and were engaged in a hollow road between two mountains, when we perceived a cavalier defending himself valiantly against three men, who attacked him all together. I did not hesitate, but rode to his succour, and put myself on his side. I observed, while we fought, that our enemies were masked, and that we had to do with vigorous swordsmen: however, in spite of their strength and skill, we remained conquerors; for I had pierced one of the three, who fell from his horse, and the other two immediately betook themselves to flight. The victory, indeed, was not much less fatal to us than to the wretch whom I killed; since, after the action, my companion and I found ourselves dangerously

wounded. But you may guess what was my surprise, when in this cavalier I recollected Combados, the husband of Donna Helena! He was no less astonished when he saw that I was his defender: "Ah, Don Gaston!" cried he, "was it you then who came to my assistance! when you so generously espoused my cause, you little thought it was that of the man who deprived you of your mistress."—"I was really ignorant of it," answered I; "but had I known you, do you imagine that I should have scrupled to do what I have done? are you so much mistaken in me as to think me so base?"—"No, no," he replied; "I have a better opinion of your virtue; and if I die of the wounds which I have received, I hope yours will not hinder you from profiting by my death."—"Combados," said I, "although I have not yet forgot Donna Helena, know, that I don't desire to enjoy her at the expense of your life; I am even glad of having contributed towards saving you from the swords of three assassins, since in that I have performed an action agreeable to your wife." While we conversed in this manner, my lacquey alighted, and approaching the dead cavalier, took off his mask, and discovered features which Combados immediately knew. "It is Caprara!" cried he, "that perfidious cousin, who, out of spite, for having been disappointed of a rich estate which he unjustly disputed with me, has a long time cherished the desire of murdering me, and at length chosen this day to put it in execution; but heaven hath permitted him to fall a victim to his own design!"

'Meanwhile, our blood flowed apace, and we grew weaker and weaker: nevertheless, wounded as we were, we had strength enough to go to the

town of Villarejo, which was but two gun-shots from the field of battle. We alighted at the first inn we came to, and sending for surgeons, one was brought, who had the reputation of being very expert in his profession. He examined our wounds, which he found dangerous, then dressed them; and next day, after having taken off the dressings, declared that the wounds of Don Blas were mortal; he judged more favourably of mine, and his prognostics were fulfilled.

'Combados, hearing his doom, thought of nothing but preparing for death; he likewise despatched an express to inform his wife of what had happened, and of his present melancholy situation; upon which Donna Helena, setting out immediately, soon arrived at Villarejo, her mind disturbed with a disquiet which had two different causes: the danger in which her husband was, and the dread of feeling, at sight of me, a flame which was but half extinguished, revive, create a terrible agitation in her breast. "Madam," said Don Blas, when she came into his presence "you arrive time enough to receive my last adieu. I am going to die; and I regard my death as the punishment of heaven, for having by a deceit deprived you of Don Gaston. Far from murmuring at my fate, I exhort you to restore to him the heart which I unjustly seized." Donna Helena answered only by her tears; and truly it was the best reply she could make, as she was not as yet so much detached from me as to forget the artifice which he had practised to make her break her vows.

'As the surgeon had prognosticated, Combados died of his wounds in less than three days, while mine indicated a speedy cure. The young

widow, who was wholly engrossed by the care of transporting her husband's corpse to Coria, in order to perform all the funeral honours which she owed to his ashes, departed from Villarejo, after having inquired (through pure politeness) about my health. As soon as I could follow her, I set out also for Coria, where, my recovery being completed, my aunt Donna Eleonora, and Don George de Galisteo, resolved that Helena and I should be married forthwith, lest fortune should again part us by some unlucky accident. This marriage was celebrated in private, on account of the too recent death of Don Blas; and a few days after I returned to Madrid with Donna Helena. As I had exceeded the time prescribed by the count-duke for my journey, I was afraid that he had given to another the lieutenancy which he had promised to me: but he had not disposed of it, and was so good as to admit the excuses which I made for my delay.

'I am now,' continued Cogollos, 'lieutenant of the Spanish guard, am pleased with my employment, and have contracted some agreeable friends, with whom I live very happily.'—'I wish I could say as much,' cried Don Andrea; 'but I am very far from being satisfied with my condition: I have lost my post, which was pretty advantageous; and I have no friends who have credit enough to procure me such another.'—'Pardon me, Signior Andrea,' said I, smiling, 'you have in me a friend who is good for something. I have already said that I am still better beloved by the count-duke than ever I was by the Duke of Lerma, and you have assurance to tell me to my face, that you have not a friend who can procure a good post for you. Have I not once before done you such a

piece of service? Remember that, by the interest of the Archbishop of Grenada, I was the occasion of your being named to exercise an employment at Mexico, where you would have made your fortune, if love had not detained you in the city of Alicant; and I am at present more capable of serving you, having the ear of the prime-minister.'—'I trust wholly to you, then,' replied Tordesillas; 'but,' added he, smiling, in his turn, 'pray don't send me to New Spain; I would not go thither if I was to be made chief judge of Mexico.'

We were interrupted in this part of our conversation by Donna Helena, who came into the hall, and whose amiable person equalled the charming idea which I had formed of her beauty. 'Madam,' said Gogollos to her, 'this is Signior de Santillane, of whom you have heard me speak, and whose agreeable company hath often suspended my sorrows while I was in prison.—'Yes, madam,' said I to Donna Helena; 'my conversation pleased him, because you was always the subject of it.' Don George's daughter made a modest reply to my compliment; after which I took my leave of this couple, protesting that I was ravished to find their long passion was at length crowned by a happy marriage. Then, addressing myself to Tordesillas, I desired him to give me his direction, which when I received, 'Without bidding you adieu, Don Andrea,' said I, 'I hope in less than eight days you will see that I have power as well as friendship.' My words were soon verified: the very next day, the count-duke furnished me with an occasion to oblige the keeper. 'Santillane,' said his excellency, 'the place of governor of the royal prison at Valladolid

lid is vacant, it brings in more than three hundred pistoles per annum, and I am resolved to bestow it upon thee.'—'I would not have it, my lord,' answered I, 'were it worth ten thousand ducats yearly: I renounce all posts that I cannot enjoy without removing from your grace.'—'But, resumed the minister, 'thou mayest very well enjoy this, without being obliged to leave Madrid, except to go sometimes to Valladolid to visit the prison.'—'You may say what you please,' I replied; 'I will not accept of that employment, but on condition that I shall be allowed to resign in favour of a brave gentleman, called Don Andrea de Tordesillas, formerly keeper of the tower of Segovia: I should love to make him that present, as an acknowledgment for the kind treatment I received from him during my confinement.'

The minister, laughing at this discourse, said 'I see, Gil Blas, thou hast a mind to make a governor of a royal prison, as thou hast made a viceroy. Well, be it so, my friend; I give to thee this vacant place for Tordesillas: but tell me freely what advantage thou wilt reap from it; for I don't believe thee fool enough to employ thy credit for nothing.'—'My lord,' answered I, 'ought not a man to pay his debts? Don Andrea, in the most disinterested manner, did me all the service he could: ought not I to requite his generosity?'—'You are become very disinterested, Mr. Santillane,' said his excellency; 'I think you were not so much so under the last minister.'—'I own it,' said I; 'my morals were corrupted by bad example; as every thing was then put to sale, I conformed myself to the fashion; and as every thing is now given away, I have resumed my integrity.'

I procured, then, the government of the royal prison of Valladolid for Don Andrea; whom, in a little time, I sent to that city, as well satisfied with his new settlement as I was with the opportunity of acquitting myself of the obligations I owed him.

CHAPTER XIV.

Santillane visits the poet Nunnez: an account of the persons whom he found, and the discourse which he heard at his lodgings.

One afternoon I was seized with an inclination of visiting the Asturian poet, being curious to know how he was lodged. I went accordingly to the house of Don Bertrand Gomez de Ribero, and asking for Nunnez, 'He does not live here,' said the porter; 'but lodges there at present, having hired the back side of the house.' So saying, he pointed to a house in the neighbourhood, whither I went; and, after having crossed a small court, entered into a naked hall, where I found my friend Fabricio still at table, with five or six of his companions, whom he treated that day.

They had almost dined, and consequently were in a trim for disputing; but as soon as they perceived me, their noisy discourse subsided into profound silence. Nunnez got up with great eagerness to receive me, crying, 'Gentlemen, this is Signior de Santillane, who is so good as to honour me with a visit; pray join me in paying your

respects to the favourite of the prime-minister. At these words all the guests got up also to salute me; and, in favour of the title which I had received, treated me with great civility and respect. Although I was neither hungry nor thirsty, I could not excuse myself from sitting down at table with them; and was even obliged to honour the toast which they had proposed.

As I imagined that my presence was a check upon their conversation, 'Gentlemen,' said I, 'I have interrupted your discourse: pray, resume it, or I will be gone.—'These gentlemen,' said Fabricio, 'were talking of the Iphigenia of Euripes. The bachelor Melchior de Villegas, who is a critic of the first order, was asking of Signior Don Jacinto de Romarata what was the most interesting circumstance of that tragedy.'—'Yes,' said Don Jacinto; 'and I answered, that it was the danger of Iphigenia.'—'And I,' said the bachelor, 'replied, (and I am ready to demonstrate my assertion) that the danger is not the most interesting part of the subject.—'What is then?' cried the old licentiate Gabriel de Leon. 'It is the wind,' said the bachelor.

The whole company burst out into laughter at this repartee, which I could not believe serious; I thought that Melchoir pronounced it with a view of enlivening the conversation; but I did not know this virtuoso, who was a man that did not at all understand raillery. 'Laugh as much as you please, gentlemen,' replied he, dryly; 'I maintain that the wind alone ought to interest, surprise, and move the spectator: figure to yourselves a numerous army assembled to go and besiege Troy; conceive all the impatience of the chiefs and soldiers to execute that enterprise,

that they may speedily return into Greece, where they have left what is most dear to them, their wives, children, and household goods; in the mean time, a cursed contrary wind detains them at Aulis, seems to nail them to the port, and if it does not change, they cannot go and besiege the city of Priam: it is the wind, therefore, which constitutes the most interesting point of that tragedy. I share with the Greeks, I espouse their cause, my whole wish is the departure of the fleet, and I see with indifference the danger of Iphigenia, since her death is the only means of obtaining a favourable wind from the gods.'

Villegas had no sooner done speaking, than the laugh was renewed at his expense. Nunnez was so mischievous as to support his opinion, that he might afford more game to the raillers, who began to pass a great many jokes upon the wind; but the bachelor, beholding them all with a phlegmatic, haughty look, treated them as ignorant and vulgar minds. I expected every moment to see them warm, and to go to loggerheads, the usual end of their dissertations: but I was balked in my expectations; they were contented with reviling one another, and withdrew when they had eaten and drank their fill.

When they were gone, I asked Fabricio, why he did not live still with his treasurer; and if he had quarrelled with him. 'Quarrelled!' answered he; 'God forbid! I am more in favour than ever with Signior Don Bertrand, who has allowed me to lodge by myself. I have, therefore, hired these lodgings, to receive my friends, and make merry with them in full liberty, which is often the case: for thou knowest that I am not of a humour to leave much wealth to my heirs; and

what is very happy for me, I am at present in a condition of enjoying parties of pleasure every day.'—'I am overjoyed to hear it, my dear Nunez,' said I; 'and I cannot help congratulating thee again upon the success of thy last tragedy: the whole eight hundred dramatic pieces of the great Lope have not brought him one fourth of what thou hast got by the Count de Saldagne.'

END OF BOOK XI.

BOOK XII.

CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas is sent to Toledo by the minister: the motive and success of his journey.

During a whole month almost, his grace had been saying to me every day, 'Santillane, the time draws near when I shall set thy address to work;' and still the time did not come. At length, however, it arrived; and his excellency spoke to me in these words: 'It is reported that, in the company of players belonging to Toledo, there is a young actress whose talents make a great noise: it is said that she dances and sings divinely, and quite captivates the spectators by her declamation. I am assured also, that she has a considerable share of beauty. Such a genius deserves to appear at court. The king loves plays, music, and dancing; and he must not be deprived of the pleasure of seeing and hearing a person of such extraordinary merit. I have resolved, therefore, to send thee to Toledo, to judge by thyself whether or not she is actually such a wonderful actress. I will be governed by the impression she shall make upon thee, as I depend a great deal on thy discernment.' I answered, that I should give his grace a good account of that affair; and prepared for my departure with one lacquey only, whom I ordered to put off the minister's livery, that things might

be done the more mysteriously; and this was very much to his excellency's taste. I set out then for Toledo, where, when I arrived, I alighted at an inn near the castle. Scarce had I set my foot to the ground, when the landlord, taking me, doubtless, for some country gentleman, said to me, 'Signior Cavalier, I suppose you are come to town to see the august ceremony of the *Auto da Fé**, which is to be performed to-morrow.' I answered in the affirmative; thinking it more prudent to let him believe that, than to give him an opportunity of questioning me about my coming to Toledo. 'You will see,' he resumed, 'one of the finest processions that ever happened: there are, I am told, more than a hundred prisoners, among whom they reckon above ten who are to be burnt.'

Next morning, indeed, before sun-rise, I heard all the bells of the city tolling; and this melancholy sound was to advertise the people, that they were going to begin the *Auto da Fé*. Curious to see this solemnity, I put on my clothes in a hurry, and repaired to the inquisition. All along the streets through which the procession was to pass, scaffolds were erected, upon one of which I hired a place. In a little time I perceived the Dominicans, who walked foremost, preceded by the banners of the inquisition. These good fathers were immediately followed by the wretched victims which were to be sacrificed that day by the Holy office. These miserable creatures walked one after another, with their heads and feet bare, each having a wax ta-

* The act of faith

per in his hand, and a godfather* by his side. Some had large scapularies of yellow stuff, garnished with St. Andrew's crosses painted red, and called *sanbenito;* others wore *carochas,* which are high paper caps, made in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and covered with flames and diabolical figures.

As I looked attentively at these unfortunate people, with a compassion which I took care to conceal, that I might not suffer for it, I thought I recollected, among those who had their heads adorned with carochas, the reverend Father Hilary, and his companion Brother Ambrose. They passed so near me, that I could not be mistaken. 'What do I see!' said I to myself; 'Heaven, wearied with the disorderly lives of these wretches, hath delivered them at last to the justice of the inquisition!' So saying, I felt myself seized with horror; I trembled from head to foot, and my spirits were so disordered, that I had almost swooned. The connexion which I once had with these rogues, the adventure of Xelva, in short, all the circumstances of my correspondence with them, presented themselves that moment to my fancy; and I thought I could never be thankful enough to God for having preserved me from the scapulary and carochas.

When the ceremony was ended, I returned to the inn, trembling at the dreadful spectacle which I had beheld: but these afflicting images which disturbed my imagination dispersed insensibly; and now my whole study was to acquit myself handsomely of the commission intrusted to my care. I waited impatiently for play-time, that I

* People named by the inquisitor, to accompany the prisoners in the *Auto da Fé*, and obliged to be answerable for them.

might go to the theatre, judging that to be the most proper beginning of my work: and, as soon as the hour came, went thither, and sat down by a knight of Alcantara; with whom entering into conversation, 'Signior,' said I to him, 'may a stranger be so bold as to ask you one question?' —'Signior Cavalier,' answered he, very politely, 'I shall think it an honour.'—'I have heard the actors of Toledo,' I resumed, 'very much extolled; pray, have I been misinformed?'—No,' replied the knight; 'their company is not bad; nay, there are great players among them. You will see, among others, the fair Lucretia, an actress of fourteen years of age, who will surprise you very much. I shall have no occasion to point her out to you; when she appears, you will easily distinguish her from the rest.' I asked if she was to play that evening: and he told me she would; observing, at the same time, that she had a very shining part to act in the piece which was going to be represented.

The play began; and two actresses, who had neglected nothing which could contribute towards rendering them charming, appeared on the stage; but, in spite of the lustre of their diamonds, I took neither the one nor the other for her whom I expected. At length Lucretia walked forward from the bottom of the stage; and her appearance was saluted by a long and general clapping of hands. 'Ah, there she is!' said I to myself: 'what a noble air! what grace! what fine eyes! O the divine creature!' I was actually very well pleased, or rather passionately struck with her person. On hearing her recite the first couplet, I found she had nature, fire, an understanding above her age; and I joined my applause to that which she

willingly received from the whole audience, during the whole performance. 'Well,' said the knight to me, 'you see how Lucretia is caressed by the public.'—'I am not at all surprised at it,' answered I. 'You would be less so still,' said he, 'if you had heard her sing. She is a perfect syren. Wo be but to those who listen! Her dancing is no less formidable: her steps, as dangerous as her voice, charm the eye, and force the heart to yield.'—'If that be the case,' cried I, 'it must be owned she is a prodigy! What happy mortal has the pleasure of ruining himself for such an amiable creature?'

'She has no declared lover,' said he, 'and even scandal has not as yet involved her in any private intrigue. Nevertheless,' added he, 'this may soon be the case; for Lucretia is under the conduct of her aunt Estella, who is certainly the most expert of all the actresses.' At the name of Estella, I interrupted the knight with precipitation, to ask if that Estella was an actress of the Toledo company. 'She is one of the best of them,' said he; 'she has not acted to-day, and we have suffered by her absence: she usually plays the part of the waiting-woman, which she performs to admiration. Her action is full of spirit; perhaps too full: but it is an agreeable fault, which ought to be forgiven.' The knight told me wonders of this Estella; and, by the picture he drew of her person, I never doubted that it was Laura, that same Laura of whom I have spoken so much in my history, and whom I had left at Grenada.

However, to be more certain still, I went behind the scenes; and, casting my eyes around, found her in the tyring-room, talking to some

gentlemen, who perhaps, regarded her only as the aunt of Lucretia. I advanced to salute Laura; but whether through whim, or in order to punish me for my precipitate departure from Grenada, she pretended not to know me, and received my civilities so dryly, that I was a little disconcerted. Instead of upbraiding her in a laughing humour for her cold behaviour towards me, I was fool enough to be nettled at it: I even retired hastily, resolving, in my passion, to return next day to Madrid. 'To be revenged of Laura,' said I to myself, 'her niece shall not have the honour of appearing before the king: for this purpose, I can give the minister such a description of Lucretia as I please; I have no more to do, but to tell him that she dances with a bad grace, that she has a squeaking voice; and, in short, that her charms consist in her youth only. I am sure that his excellency, after that, will have no inclination to bring her to court.'

Such was the vengeance I meditated against Laura for her behaviour to me; but my resentment did not last long: next day, just as I was about to depart, a page entered my chamber, and said, 'Here is a letter for Signior de Santillane.' —'I am the person, my child,' answered I, taking the letter, which contained these words:

'Forgive the manner in which you was received last night in the tyring-room, and be so good as to follow the bearer.'

I immediately took the page for my conductor, who, when we were near the playhouse, introduced me into a very handsome house, where I found Laura at her toilette, in a very genteel apartment.

She got up to embrace me, saying, 'Signior Gil Blas, I know that you have no cause to be pleased with the reception you met with when you came to salute me in our tyring-room; an old friend, like you, had a right to expect more civil treatment: but I must tell you, for my excuse, that I was then in a very bad humour. When you appeared, I was quite engrossed by some scandalous discourse which one of our gentlemen had uttered against my niece, whose honour is dearer to me than my own. Your sudden retreat,' added she, 'made me immediately recollect myself; and that moment I ordered my page to follow you to your lodging, that I might to-day make amends for my fault.'—'That is already done, my dear Laura,' said I; 'let us talk no more of that matter: let us rather inform one another what has happened to us since the unlucky day on which the dread of just chastisement made me quit Grenada with great precipitation. I left you, you may remember, in pretty great perplexity: pray how did you extricate yourself? Had you not occasion for all your address to appease your Portuguese lover?' 'Not at all,' replied Laura: 'don't you know, that in such cases the men are so weak, that they sometimes even spare the women the trouble to justify themselves? I affirmed,' continued she, 'to the Marquis de Marialva, that thou wast my brother. Pardon me, Mr. Santillane, if I speak to you as familiarly as heretofore: but I can't get rid of my old habits. I tell thee, then, that I brazened it out. 'Don't you see,' said I to the Portuguese nobleman, 'that all this is the work of jealousy and rage? Narcissa, my comrade and rival, incensed to see me in quiet possession of a heart of which she

was balked, has played me this trick: she has bribed the under candle-snuffer; who, as the minister of her resentment, has the impudence to say, that he has seen me Arsenia's chambermaid. Nothing can be more false: the widow of Don Antonio Cœlo always entertained too noble sentiments to humble herself so low as to serve an actress. Besides, what proves the falsity of the accusation, and the conspiracy of my accusers, is the precipitate retreat of my brother: if he was present, he might confound their slander; but Narcissa has, doubtless, employed some new artifice to make him disappear." Though these reasons,' pursued Laura, 'made but an indifferent apology, the marquis was so good as to be satisfied with it; and that good-natured nobleman continued to love me until the day of his departure from Grenada, on his return to Portugal. Indeed, he did not stay long after thee; and the wife of Zapata had the pleasure of seeing me lose the lover of whom I had deprived her. After that I lived some years at Grenada; then a division happening in our company, which is often the case, all the players separated: some went to Seville, others to Cordova, and I came to Toledo, where I have been ten years, with my niece Lucretia, whom thou must have seen act last night, since thou wast at the play.'

I could not help laughing in this place; and Laura asking the cause, 'Can't you guess?' said I. 'You have neither brother nor sister, and of consequence cannot be Lucretia's aunt. Besides, when I calculate the time which hath elapsed since our last separation, and compare it with the age of your niece, I cannot help thinking that you are more nearly related.'

'I understand you, Mr. Gil Blas,' replied Don Antonio's widow, reddening; 'what a chronologist you are! it is impossible to make you believe it. Well then, my friend, Lucretia is my daughter by the Marquis de Marialva; she is the fruit of our correspondence; I can no longer conceal it from thee.' 'What a great effort you make, my princess,' said I, 'in revealing that secret, after having imparted to me your adventures with the steward of the hospital of Zamora. I must tell you, moreover, Lucretia is a maid of such singular merit, that the public can never be thankful enough to you for having made such a present to it. It were to be wished that all your comrades had done the same.' If some mischievous readers, in this place, recollecting the private conversations which I had with Laura at Grenada, while I was secretary to the Marquis de Marialva, suspects that I might have disputed with that nobleman the honour of being Lucretia's father, it is a suspicion the justice of which I must avow to my shame. I recounted my principal adventures to Laura in my turn, and made her acquainted with my present situation. She listened to my narration so attentively as to show that it was far from being indifferent; and when I had finished it, 'Friend Santillane,' said she, 'I find you act a very considerable part on the theatre of the world; and you cannot imagine how much I am overjoyed at your good fortune. When I shall bring Lucretia to Madrid, with an intention to introduce her into the prince's company, I flatter myself that she will find a powerful protector in Signior de Santillane.' 'Never doubt that,' answered I; 'you may depend upon me: I will procure your daughter's admittance

into the prince's company whenever you please; this is what I can promise, without presuming too much upon my power.' 'I would take you at your word,' replied Laura, 'and set out for Madrid to-morrow, were I not restricted to this place by engagements with our company.' 'An order from court can break these ties,' said I; 'and you shall receive one in less than eight days. I shall be pleased in taking Lucretia from the Toledans: such a handsome actress is destined for courtiers, and properly belongs to us.'

Lucretia entered the room just as I had pronounced these words, and seemed so pretty and engaging, that I took her for the goddess Hebe. She had just risen; and her natural beauty, shining without the help of art, presented a ravishing object to my view. 'Come, niece,' said her mother to her, 'come and thank this gentleman for his friendship: he is an old acquaintance of mine, who has great interest at court, and intends to introduce us both into the prince's company.' These words seemed to give pleasure to the dear girl, who made me a low curtsey, and said, with an enchanting smile, 'I most humbly thank you for your obliging intention; but, in taking me from the people by whom I am beloved, are you sure I shall please the audience at Madrid? I shall, perhaps, lose by the change. I remember to have heard my aunt say, that she has seen actors caressed in one place, and hissed in another, and this gives me some concern; beware of exposing me to the contempt, and yourself to the reproaches, of the court.' 'Fair Lucretia,' answered I, 'neither you nor I have reason to be apprehensive of that: I rather fear that, by inflaming all that behold you, you

will create some misunderstanding among our grandees.' 'The fear of my niece,' said Laura, 'is better founded than yours; but I hope they are both vain: if Lucretia cannot make a noise by her charms, in recompense, she is no contemptible actress.'

Our conversation lasted some time longer; and I had reason to conclude, from every thing which Lucretia said, that she was a maid of a superior genius. I then took my leave of the two ladies, assuring them that they should soon have an order from court to repair to Madrid.

CHAPTER II.

Santillane gives an account of his commission to the minister, who employs him to bring Lucretia to Madrid. The arrival of that actress, and her appearance at court.

At my return to Madrid, I found the count-duke very impatient to know the success of my journey. 'Gil Blas,' said he, 'hast thou seen this same actress? Is she worth bringing to court?' 'My lord,' I replied, 'Fame, which usually praises beauties more than they deserve, has not said enough in commendation of young Lucretia: she is an admirable creature, both as to her person and talents.' 'Is it possible!' cried the minister, with an interior satisfaction which I read in his eyes, and which made me believe that he had sent me to Toledo on his own account, 'is it possible that she can be so amiable?' 'When you have seen her,' answered I, 'you will own that no eulogium can do justice to her charms.'

'Santillane,' said his excellency, 'give me a faithful relation of thy journey; I shall be very glad to hear it.' To satisfy my master, I then recounted all, even the history of Laura inclusively. I told him, that this actress had Lucretia by the Marquis de Marialva, a Portuguese nobleman, who, stopping at Grenada on his travels, fell in love with her. In short, when I had recounted to his grace every thing that had happened between the two actresses and me, he said, 'I am overjoyed to hear that Lucretia is the daughter of a man of quality; that circumstance interests me still more in her behalf; she must be brought to town. But,' added he, 'continue as thou hast begun; let not me appear in it: every thing must pass in the name of Gil Blas de Santillane.'

I went and told Carnero, that his excellency desired him to expedite an order, by which the king received into his company Estella and Lucretia, two actresses of Toledo. 'Aha, Signior de Santillane!' said Carnero, with a satirical smile; 'yes, you shall be served immediately, since, in all appearance, you interest yourself for these two ladies.' At the same time, he wrote an order with his own hand, and delivered it to me expedited; so that I sent it instantly to Estella by the same lacquey who had attended me to Toledo. Eight days after, the mother and daughter arriving at Madrid, took lodgings hard by the prince's company, and their first care was to give me notice of it by a billet. I visited them immediately, where, after a thousand offers of service on my side, and as many acknowledgments on theirs, I left them to prepare for their first public appearance, which I wished might be brilliant and successful.

They advertised themselves as two new actresses, whom the prince's company had received by an order from court; and they began with a comedy which they had often acted at Toledo with applause. In what part of the world are new sights disregarded? The playhouse was that day filled with an extraordinary concourse of spectators; and you may well imagine that I did not fail to be there. I suffered a little before the piece began: and, prepossessed as I was in favour of the talents both of the mother and daughter, I trembled for them, so much was I interested in their success. But scarce had they opened their mouths, when my fear was banished by the applause which they received. Estella was looked upon as a consummate comic actress, and Lucretia as a prodigy in tender parts. This last captivated all hearts. Some admired the beauty of her eyes, others were touched by the sweetness of her voice; and every body, struck with the graces and brilliancy of her youth, went away enchanted by her appearance.

The count-duke, being more interested than I imagined in the first essay of this actress, was at the play that evening; and I saw him go out about the end of the performance, seemingly very well satisfied with our two new players. Curious to know if he was really affected with their success, I followed him home, and going into his closet just after him, 'Well, my lord,' said I, 'is your excellency satisfied with young Marialva?'—'My excellency,' answered he, smiling, 'would be very nice indeed, if I refused to join my vote to that of the public. Yes, child, I am charmed with thy Lucretia, and I don't doubt that the king will be pleased when he sees her.'

CHAPTER III.

Lucretia makes a great noise at court, and acts before the king, who falls in love with her. The consequence of his passion.

The appearance of two new actresses soon made a noise at court; the very next day it was spoke of at the king's levee. Some noblemen extolled young Lucretia in particular, and drew such a beautiful picture of her, that the monarch was struck with it: but, dissembling the impression which their discourses made upon his heart, he seemed to take no notice of what they said. Nevertheless, as soon as he found himself alone with the count-duke, he asked who this actress was whom they praised so much. The minister answered, that she was a young player of Toledo, who had made her first appearance the preceding night with great success. 'She is called Lucretia,' added he; 'a name very suitable to people of her profession. She is an acquaintance of Santillane's, who spoke so much in her favour that I thought proper to receive her into your majesty's company.'

The king smiled when he heard my name mentioned, because he remembered, perhaps, at that moment, that it was I who made him acquainted with Catalina, and foresaw that I should do him the same service on this occasion. 'Count,' said he to the minister, 'I will go to-morrow and see this Lucretia act. Take care to advertise her of my intention.'

The count-duke having repeated this conver-

sation to me, and informed me of the king's design, sent me to impart it to our two actresses. 'I come,' said I to Laura, who was the first I met, 'to tell you a piece of great news; you will, tomorrow, have among your spectators the sovereign of this monarchy; this is what I am ordered by the minister to acquaint you with. I don't doubt that your daughter and you will do your utmost to deserve the honour which the king intends you; but I advise you to choose a piece in which there is both dancing and music, that he may admire all the talents of Lucretia together.' —'We will take your advice,' replied Laura, 'and do all in our power to amuse the prince.'— 'He cannot fail of being pleased,' said I, seeing Lucretia come in, in a dishabille, which gave her more charms than the most superb theatrical dress. 'He will be so much the more satisfied with your lovely niece, as he loves singing and dancing above all other entertainments: who knows but he may be tempted to throw the handkerchief at her!'—'I don't at all wish,' replied Laura, 'that he may have any such temptation; notwithstanding his being a powerful monarch, he might find obstacles to the accomplishment of his desires. Lucretia is virtuous, though bred behind the scenes; and whatever pleasure she may feel in seeing herself applauded on the stage, she would much rather pass for a modest girl than for a good actress.'

'Why should my aunt,' said young Marialva, joining in the conversation, 'form such chimeras to fight with? I shall never be obliged to repulse the sighs of the king; the delicacy of his taste will save him from the reproaches he would deserve, if he could humble his attention to me.'

—'But, charming Lucretia,' said I, 'should it happen that the prince would attach himself to you, and choose you for his mistress, would you be so cruel as to let him languish in your chains like an ordinary lover?'—'Why not?' answered she. 'Yes, doubtless: and though virtue were out of the question, my vanity would exult much more in resisting than in yielding to his passion.' I was not a little astonished to hear a pupil of Laura talk in this manner, and left the ladies; praising the last for having bestowed such good education on the other.

Next day the king, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the play. They acted a performance, mixed with songs and dances, in which our young actress shone very much. From the beginning to the end, I kept my eyes fixed on the monarch, and in his looks endeavoured to read his thoughts but he baffled my penetration by an air of gravity which all along he affected to preserve. I did not learn till next day what I was so curious to know. 'Santillane,' said the minister to me, 'I have just left the king, who has spoke to me of Lucretia with so much vivacity, that I am convinced he is captivated by that young player; and, as I told him thou wast the occasion of bringing her from Toledo, he said he should be glad to talk with thee in private on that subject. Go, instantly, and present thyself at his chamber-door, where there is an order already given to admit thee. Run, therefore, and bring me back, as soon as possible, an account of the conversation.'

'I flew instantly to the palace, where I found the king alone, walking very fast in expectation of my coming, and seemingly very much perplexed. He put several questions to me about

Lucretia, whose history he obliged me to recount: he then asked, if the little gentlewoman had never been engaged in any intrigue. I boldly assured him that she had not, (though these sorts of assurances are a little rash!) and the prince seemed very glad to hear it. 'If that be the case,' said he, 'I choose thee for my agent with Lucretia; and desire, that by thy means she may this evening learn her victory. Go, signify her conquest from me,' added he, putting into my hand a diamond necklace worth forty thousand crowns; 'and tell her, that I desire she will accept of that present, until I give her more solid marks of my affection.'

Before I performed this commission, I went back to the count-duke, and made a faithful report of what the king had said: with this I imagined the minister would be more afflicted than rejoiced; for I believed (as I have already observed) that he himself had amorous views upon Lucretia, and would be chagrined to hear that his master was become his rival; but I was mistaken. Far from seeming mortified at the news, it gave him so much joy, that, being unable to contain it, some words escaped him, which did not fall to the ground. 'Aha, Philip!' cried he; 'egad! I have you fast. For once, you will be sick of business.' This apostrophe disclosed the whole contrivance of the count-duke. I now perceived that the minister, being afraid of the king's applying himself to serious affairs, endeavoured to amuse him with pleasures more suitable to his humour. 'Santillane,' said he, afterwards, 'lose no time; make haste, my friend, to go and execute the important order which thou hast received, and which a great many noblemen

at court would glory in performing. Consider,' said he, 'that thou hast here no Count de Lemos to deprive thee of one half of the honour acquired in this service: thou wilt have it entirely to thyself; and, moreover, enjoy all the fruits of it.'

Thus did his excellency gild the pill, which I swallowed down gently, though not without tasting the bitterness of it: for, since my imprisonment, I had been used to look upon things in a moral point of view, and did not think the post of Mercury in chief quite so honourable as it was called. However, though I was not vicious enough to perform it without remorse, I had not virtue sufficient to make me refuse the employment. I therefore obeyed the king the more willingly, as I saw at the same time that my compliance would be agreeable to the minister, whom it was my sole study to please. I thought proper to address myself first to Laura, to whom, in a private conversation, I disclosed my mission in a discreet manner; and towards the end of the discourse, presented the jewels; at sight of which the lady, being unable to conceal her joy, gave a loose to it. 'Signior Gil Blas,' cried she, 'I ought not to constrain myself before my oldest and best friend. I should be to blame in affecting a false severity of morals, and making grimaces with you. Yes, you need not doubt it,' continued she; 'I am overjoyed that my daughter has made such a precious conquest, all the advantages of which I comprehend; but, between you and me, I am afraid that Lucretia will look upon them with a different eye: for, though a young actress, she is so careful of her chastity, that she has already rejected the addresses of two young noblemen

both amiable and rich. You may say, indeed, that these were not kings. True; and in all probability the passion of a crowned head will shake the virtue of Lucretia. Nevertheless, I must tell you, that the thing is uncertain, and I declare that I will never force the inclinations of my daughter. If, far from thinking herself honoured by the transient affection of the king, she shall regard that honour as infamous, let not that great prince be disobliged if she shall conceal herself from him. Return to-morrow,' added she, 'and then I will tell you whether you must carry back to him a favourable answer, or his jewels.'

I did not at all doubt that Laura would exhort Lucretia to swerve from her duty, rather than remain in it, and I depended a good deal on that exhortation. Nevertheless, I learned with surprise next day, that Laura had as much difficulty in swaying her daughter to vice, as other mothers have to form theirs to virtue; and, which is still more surprising, Lucretia, after having granted some private interviews to the monarch, felt so much remorse for having yielded to his desires, that she quitted the world all of a sudden, and shut herself up in the monastery of the Incarnation, where she soon fell sick, and died of grief. Laura being inconsolable for the loss of her daughter, whose death she upbraided herself with, retired into the convent of the Female Penitents, there to mourn the pleasures of her youth. The king was affected by the unexpected retreat of Lucretia; but being of a humour not to be long affected at any thing, consoled himself by degrees for this event. As for the count-duke, although he did not seem very much touched at this incident, it did not fail to give him a great

deal of mortification, and this the reader will easily believe.

CHAPTER IV.

Santillane is invested by the minister with a new employment.

I was also sensibly affected by the misfortune of Lucretia, and felt such remorse for having contributed to it, that looking upon myself as an infamous wretch, in spite of the quality of the lover whose passion I had served, I resolved to abandon the caduceus for ever. I even expressed to the minister the reluctance I had to bear it, and begged he would employ me in something else. 'Santillane, said he, 'I am charmed with thy delicacy;' and, since thou art a man of such honour, will give thee an occupation more suitable to thy virtue. This it is; listen attentively to what I am going to impart.

'Some years before I was in favour,' continued he, 'chance one day presented to my view a lady so handsome and well made, that I ordered her to be followed. I learned that she was a Genoese, called Donna Margarita Spinola, who lived at Madrid on the revenue of her beauty, and that Don Francisco de Valeasar,* an alcade of the

* Don Francisco de Valeasar actually married this lady when she was big with child, and adopted the boy, whom he educated and acknowledged as his own son during the space of thirty-one years; at the expiration of which the count-duke, finding himself without heirs-male, had him legitimated, and created Marquis de Mayorga.

court, a rich old married man, spent a great deal of money upon the coquette. This report, which ought to have inspired me with contempt for her, made me conceive a violent desire of sharing her favours with Valeasar; and, to satisfy it, I had recourse to a female go-between, who had the address in a little time to procure for me a private interview with the Genoese; and that was followed by many more, so that my rival and I were equally treated for our presents. Perhaps, too, she had other gallants as happy as we were.

'Be that as it will, Margarita, in receiving such confused homage, insensibly became pregnant, and brought forth a son, the honour of whom she bestowed on each of her lovers in particular; but not one of them being in conscience able to boast himself the father of that child, it was disowned by them all; so that the Genoese was obliged to maintain it with the fruit of her intrigues: this she did for eighteen years, at the end of which term dying, she has left her son without fortune, and, which is worse, without education.

'This,' pursued his grace, 'is the secret I had to impart, and will now inform thee of the great design which I have projected. I will bring this unfortunate child from obscurity; and, making him pass from one extreme to another, raise him to bonours, and own him for my son.'

At this extravagant project it was impossible for me to hold my tongue. 'How, my lord!' cried I; 'can your excellency have taken such a strange resolution? pardon me for using that term, which hath escaped my zeal.' 'Thou wilt say that I am very prudent,' he replied, with precipitation, 'when I have told thee the reasons that have determined me to take it. I don't do

sure that my collaterals should be my heirs. Thou wilt say, that I am not as yet of such an advanced age as to make me despair of having children by my Lady Olivarez. But every one knows himself best. Let it suffice to tell thee, that there is no secret in chemistry which I have not tried in vain to become a father. Therefore, since fortune, supplying the defects of nature, presents a child to me, whose true father perhaps I am, I am resolved to adopt him.' When I saw the minister bent on this adoption, I ceased to oppose it, knowing him to be a man capable of committing a foolish action rather than swerve from his own opinion. 'The sole business now,' added he, 'is to bestow education upon Don Henry Philip de Guzman, (for this name I intend he shall bear) until he shall be in a condition to possess the dignities that await him. Thou, my dear Santillane, art the person whom I choose to be his tutor. I confide in thy understanding and attachment to me for thy care in regulating his family, in giving him all sorts of masters; in a word, of making him an accomplished cavalier.' I would have refused this employment, representing to the count-duke that I was very ill qualified to educate young noblemen, having never practised that business, which required more knowledge and merit than I possessed. But he interrupted me, and shut my mouth, by saying, that he was absolutely resolved to make me governor to this adopted son, whom he destined for the first office of the monarchy. I prepared myself, therefore, to fill this place for the satisfaction of his grace, who, to reward my compliance, increased my small revenue with a pension of a thousand

crowns, which he procured, or rather gave me on the commandery of Mamdra.

CHAPTER V.

The son of the Genoese is owned by an authentic act, and called Don Henry Philip de Guzman. Santillane forms the family of that young nobleman, and hires all sorts of masters for him.

The count-duke in a little time actually owned the son of Donna Margarita Spinola, and the deed was executed with the consent and inclination of the king. Don Henry Philip de Guzman (for that was the name given to this child of many fathers) was declared sole heir of the Count d'Olivarez, and of the duchy of San Lucar. The minister, that nobody might be ignorant of this event, ordered Carnero to communicate the declaration to the ambassadors and grandees of Spain, who were not a little surprised at his conduct. The wits of Madrid had a fund of mirth from it a long time, and the satirical poets did not neglect such a fair occasion of shedding the gall of their pens.

When I asked where this gentleman was whom his grace intended to intrust to my care, 'he is in this city,' he replied, 'under the direction of an aunt, from whom I will take him as soon as thou shalt have prepared a house for him.' This was soon performed. I took a house, which I caused to be magnificently furnished; hired pages, a porter, and footman; and, with the assistance of Caporis, filled up the places of his officers. When I had completed his attendants, I went

and advertised his excellency, who immediately sent for his equivocal heir and new shoot from the trunk of the Guzmans, and I found him a tall young fellow, of an agreeable person. 'Don Henry,' said his grace to him, pointing with his finger to me, 'this gentleman is the guide whom I have chosen to conduct you in the career of life. I have the greatest confidence in him, and give him an absolute power over you. Yes, Santillane,' said he, turning to me, 'I abandon him entirely to your care, and don't doubt that you will give a good account of him.' To this discourse the minister joined others, exhorting the young man to submit to my directions; after which I conducted Don Henry to his house, where, when we arrived, I made all his domestics pass in review before him, signifying the office of each. He did not seem confounded at the change of his condition; and, accommodating himself to the deference and officious respect that was shown to him, he seemed to have been always that which he was now become by chance. He did not want capacity, but was wholly illiterate, being scarce able to read or write. I furnished him with a preceptor to teach him the elements of the Latin tongue, and hired for him masters of geography, history, and fencing. You may well believe that I did not forget a dancing-master: I was only embarrassed in the choice; for at that time there was a great number famous in that profession at Madrid, and I did not know to whom I ought to give the preference. While I was in this perplexity, a man richly dressed came into the court, and I being told that he wanted to speak with me, went to him, imagining that

he was at least a knight of St. Jago or Alcantara. When I asked his commands, 'Signior de Santillane,' answered he, after having made several bows, which smelled strongly of his profession, 'understanding that your worship is the person who chooses masters for Signior Don Henry, I am come to offer my service; my name is Martin Ligero; and I have (thank heaven) some reputation. It is not my custom to come and solicit for scholars; that is the province of little obscure dancing-masters. I usually wait until I am sent for; but as I have taught the Duke de Medina Sidonia, Don Lewis de Haro, and some other noblemen of the family of Guzman, to which I am as it were a servant born, I thought it my duty to anticipate your message.'—'I find by your discourse,' said I, 'that you are the man we want. How much do you take per month?' 'Four double pistoles,' answered he, 'is the current price, and I give but two lessons per week.' 'Four doubloons a month!' cried I; 'that is a great deal.' 'How! a great deal!' replied he, with an air of astonishment; 'you would give a pistole a month to a master of philosophy.'

There was no resisting such a pleasant reply, at which I laughed heartily, and asked Signior Ligero, if he really thought a man of his profession preferable to a master of philosophy. 'Doubtless,' said he, 'we are of much greater use than those gentlemen. What is a man before he has passed through our hands? what but an ill-licked cub? but our lessons mould him by little and little into a due form. In a word, we teach him to move gracefully, giving him attitudes and airs of dignity and importance.'

I yielded to the arguments of this dancing-mas-

ter, whom I hired for Don Henry at the rate of four double pistoles a month, since that was the price of great masters of his art.

CHAPTER VI.

Scipio returning from New Spain, Gil Blas settles him in the service of Don Henry. The studies of that young nobleman, with the honours which were conferred upon him, and an account of the lady to whom he was married. Gil Blas becomes noble in spite of himself.

I had not as yet completed the half of Don Henry's family, when Scipio returned from Mexico. I asked him if he was satisfied with his voyage, and he answered, 'I have reason to be so; since, with three thousand ducats in specie, I have brought over twice as much in merchandise of the consumption of this country.' 'I congratulate thee, my child,' I replied. 'Thy fortune is now begun; and it is in thy power to complete it, by returning to the Indies next year: or, if thou preferrest an agreeable post at Madrid to the trouble of going so far to amass wealth, thou hast nothing to do but to speak; I have one at thy service.' 'Egad!' said the son of Coscolina, 'there is no room for hesitation. I would much rather execute a good employment near you, than expose myself anew to the perils of a long voyage. Pray, master, explain yourself; what post do you intend for your humble servant?"

For his better information, I recounted to him the story of the young nobleman whom the count-duke had introduced into the family of Guzman;

and after having told him, that the minister had chosen me governor to Don Henry, I promised to make him valet de chambre to that adopted son. Scipio, who asked no better, willingly accepted the post, and acquitted himself in it so well, that in less than three or four days he acquired the confidence and friendship of his new master.

I imagined that the pedagogues whom I had chosen to teach the son of the Genoese, would find their Latin thrown away, believing one at his age undisciplinable. But I was much mistaken. He easily comprehended and retained all that was shown to him, and his masters were very well satisfied with his capacity. I ran eagerly to impart this piece of news to the duke, who received it with excessive joy. 'Santillane,' cried he, transported, 'I am ravished to hear that Don Henry has such a memory and penetration! I perceive my own blood in him; and what convinces me of his being my son is, that I feel as much affection for him, as if he had been born by my Lady Olivarez. Thou seest by this, my friend, that nature declares itself. I was not fool enough to tell his grace my sentiments of the matter; but, respecting his weakness, left him to enjoy the pleasure (whether true or false) of believing himself the father of Don Henry.

Although the Guzmans entertained a mortal hatred to this young nobleman of fresh date, they dissembled it out of policy; nay, some of them affected to court his friendship; he was visited by the ambassadors and grandees who were then at Madrid, and honoured by them as much as if he had been a legitimate son of the count-duke. This minister, overjoyed to see such incense of-

fered to his idol, soon decked him with dignities. He began by asking of the king the cross of Alcantara, with a commandery of ten thousand crowns, for Don Henry. In a little time after he was made gentleman of the bed-chamber. Then, resolving to marry him to a lady of the most noble family of Spain, he cast his eyes upon Donna Juana Velasco, daughter to the duke of Castile, and had authority enough to accomplish the marriage, in spite of that duke and all his relations.

A few days before the marriage, his grace having sent for me, put some papers into my hand, saying, 'Hold, Gil Blas, here are letters of nobility, which I have ordered to be expedited for thee.'—'My lord,' answered I, surprised at his words, 'your excellency knows that I am the son of a poor duenna and squire; so that, in my opinion, the nobility would be profaned by my association; and it is, of all the favours which his majesty could bestow, that which I deserve and desire the least.'—'Thy birth,' replied the minister, 'is an objection that is easily removed: thou hast been employed in state affairs, both under the Duke of Lerma's ministry and mine: besides,' added he, with a smile, 'hast thou not done the monarch some service which deserves a recompense? In a word, Santillane, thou art not unworthy the honour which I have procured for thee. Moreover, the rank which thou holdest with regard to my son, requires that thou shouldst be noble; and it is on that account that I have obtained the patent.'—'I yield, my lord,' I replied, 'since your excellency insists upon my compliance.' So saying, I went away with my patent in my pocket.

'I am now a gentleman,' said I to myself, when

I had got into the street, 'ennobled without being obliged to my parents for my quality. I may, when I please, be called Don Gil Blas; and if any one of my acquaintance shall take it in his head to laugh in my face when he calls me so, I will show my patent. But let us read it,' continued I, taking it out of my pocket, 'and see in what manner my original meanness is washed away.' I therefore perused the paper, the substance of which was, that the king, to reward the zeal which I had manifested on more than one occasion for his service and the good of the state, had thought proper to gratify my attachment with letters of nobility. I will venture to say, in my own praise, that they did not inspire me with the least pride. Having the meanness of my extraction always before my eyes, this honour humbled instead of making me vain; therefore I determined to lock up my patent in a drawer, and never boast of its being in my possession.

CHAPTER VII.

Gil Blas meets Fabricio again by accident. The last conversation that happened between them, and the important advice which Nunnez gave to Santillane.

The Asturian poet (as must have been observed by the reader) willingly neglected me; and my occupations did not permit me to visit him. I had not seen him since the day of the dissertation on the Iphigenia of Euripides, when chance

again threw him in my way near the Gate of the Sun. He was coming out of a printing-house, and I accosted him, saying, 'Aha, Mr. Nunnez! you have been at the printer's; that seems to threaten the public with a new work of your composition.'—'That is what, indeed, it may expect,' answered he. 'I have actually in the press a pamphlet which will make some noise in the republic of letters.'—'I don't doubt the merit of thy production,' I replied, 'but am amazed at thy composing pamphlets, which in my opinion are trifles that do no great honour to a man of genius.'—'I know it very well,' said Fabricio, 'and am not ignorant that none but those who read every thing amuse themselves with pamphlets. However, this one has escaped me, which I own is the child of necessity. Hunger, thou knowest, brings the wolf out of the wood.'

'How!' cried I; 'does the author of the Count de Saldagne talk in this manner? a man who has two thousand crowns a-year!'—'Softly, friend,' said Nunnez to me; I am no longer that happy poet who enjoyed a well-paid pension. The affairs of the treasurer Don Bertrand are disordered all of a sudden. He has fingered and squandered away the king's money; all his effects are seized, and my pension is gone to the devil.'—'That is a melancholy affair,' I resumed; 'but hast thou no hope remaining from that quarter?'—'Not the least,' said he. 'Signior Gomez de Ribero, as poor as his poet, is gone to the bottom, and will never, it is said, get his head above water again.'

'If that be the case, my child, answered I, 'I must find out some post to console thee for the loss of thy pension.'—'I will spare thee that trouble,' cried he. 'If thou wouldst offer me an

employment in the minister's offices, worth three thousand crowns yearly, I would refuse it. The business of clerks will not agree with the humour of a foster-child of the Muses: I must enjoy my literary amusements. What shall I say to thee? I am born to live and die a poet, and my destiny must be fulfilled.

'But don't imagine,' continued he, 'that we are very unhappy; besides that we live in perfect independence, we are boys without care. People think that we often dine with Democritus, and there they are mistaken. There is not one of my fraternity not even excepting the makers of almanacks, who is not welcome to some good table. As for my part, there are two families where I am always received with pleasure. I have two covers laid for me every day, one at the house of a fat director of the farms, to whom I have dedicated a romance; and the other at the house of a rich citizen, who has the disease of being thought to entertain wits every day at his table; luckily he is not very delicate in his choice, and the city furnishes him with great plenty.'

'I no longer pity thee then,' said I to the Asturian poet, 'since thou art satisfied with thy condition: though I protest to thee anew, that thou hast always in Gil Blas a friend who is proof against neglect and indifference; if thou hast occasion for my purse, come boldly to me; and let not a silly shame deprive thee of an infallible succour, and rob me of the pleasure of obliging thee.'

'By that generous sentiment,' cried Nunnez, 'I recollect my friend Santillane; I return a thousand thanks for thy kind offer, and out of gratitude will give thee a wholesome advice. While

the count-duke continues in power, and thou art in possession of his favour, profit by the opportunity; make haste to enrich thyself; for I am told he begins to totter.' I asked Fabricio if he had that intelligence on good authority; and he answered, 'I have it from a knight of Calatrava, who has a very singular talent in discovering the most hidden secrets; he is looked upon as an oracle, and this is what I heard him say yesterday. The count-duke has a great many enemies, who are all united to ruin him; he depends too much on the ascendancy which he has over the king, that monarch, it is reported, begins to listen to the complaints which have already reached his ears.' I thanked Nunnez for his information, of which I took little notice, but went home, persuaded that my master's authority was immoveable, and considering him as one of those old oaks which are rooted in a forest, and which no storms can overthrow.

CHAPTER VIII.

Gil Blas is convinced of the truth of Fabricio's intelligence. The king goes to Saragossa.

Nevertheless, what the Asturian poet had told me was not without foundation. There was in the palace a secret confederacy formed against the count-duke, and the queen was said to be at the head of it; but not one of the measures which they took to displace the minister transpired: nay, a whole year passed before I perceived that his favour had received the least shock.

But the revolt of the Catalonians, supported by France, and the bad success of the war against these rebels, excited the murmurs of the people, who complained of the government. These complaints occasioned a council to be held in presence of the king, who desired the Marquis de Grana, the emperor's ambassador at the court of Spain, to be there; the subject of their deliberation being, whether it was proper for the king to stay in Castile, or go and show himself to his troops in Arragon. The count-duke, who was averse to the prince's departure for the army, spoke first; he represented, that it was better for his majesty to remain in the centre of his dominions; and supported his opinion with all the reasons which his eloquence could afford. He had no sooner concluded his speech, than his advice was unanimously followed by every body in council, except the Marquis de Grana; who, listening to nothing but his zeal for the house of Austria, and, giving way to the frankness of his nation, opposed the sentiment of the prime-minister, and supported the contrary opinion with such force, that the king was struck with the solidity of his arguments, embraced his opinion, though it was opposite to that of the whole council, and fixed the day of his departure for the army.

This was the first time that ever his majesty durst think otherwise than his favourite; who, looking upon this novelty as a bloody affront, was very much mortified. When the minister was going to retire into his closet, to bite upon the bridle at liberty, he perceived me, and taking me in along with him, recounted what had passed at council with great agitation: then, like a man

who could not recollect himself from his surprise; 'Yes, Santillane,' continued he, 'the king, who for these twenty years past hath spoke with my mouth, and seen through my eyes, now prefers the opinion of Grana to mine; and in what manner too? loading the ambassador with eulogiums, and, in particular, praising his zeal for the house of Austria, as if that German loved it better than I do!

'By this it is easy to judge,' pursued the minister, 'that there is a party formed against me, and that the queen is at the head of it.'—'Why, my lord,' said I, 'should you be uneasy with that conjecture? Has not the queen, for more than twelve years, been used to see you at the helm; and the king been in a long habit of not consulting her? As for the Marquis of Grana, the monarch, perhaps, chose his opinion out of desire to see his army, and make a campaign.—'That is not the case,' said the count-duke; 'say, rather, my enemies hope that the king, being among his troops, will always be surrounded by the noblemen who will attend him; and that more than one will be found so much disgusted at me, as to speak to the prejudice of my administration; but they are mistaken,' added he; 'I will make the prince inaccessible to them all during the journey.' This he actually performed, in a manner that deserves to be related.

The day of the king's departure being arrived, that monarch, after having intrusted the queen with the care of the government in his absence, set out for Saragossa; but, in his way, passing by Aranjuez*, was so delighted with the place, that

* Aranjuez is a royal palace in New Castile, situated near the rivers of Tajo and Garama, in a large plain surrounded

he staid there almost three weeks: from thence the minister carried him to Cuenca, where he amused him still longer by various diversions. Then the pleasures of the chase detained him at Molina of Arragon; after which he was conducted to Saragossa.

His army being not far from thence, he appeared for going to it; but the count-duke altered his inclination, by making him believe that he would be in danger of being taken by the French, who were masters of the plain of Moncon: so that the king, being afraid of the peril which he had cause to fear, took the resolution of remaining shut up at home as in a prison. The minister taking the advantage of his terror, and under pretence of watching for his safety, guarded him, as it were, from the sight of every body; and the grandees, who had been at a vast expense to put themselves in a condition to follow their sovereign, had not even the satisfaction of obtaining one private audience. Philip, at length, tired of being ill-lodged at Saragossa, of passing his time still worse, or, if you please, of being prisoner, returned in a little time to Madrid. Thus this monarch finished his campaign, leaving to the Marquis de los Veles, general of his troops, the care of maintaining the honour of the Spanish arms.

by hills and forests, through which are many spacious avenues. The entrance to this palace is over two painted wooden bridges, upon the aforesaid rivers, which join a little below the house. Here is a delightful garden; and, in a large square paved with marble, a statue in brass of Charles the Fifth, armed cap-a-pee, trampling upon Heresy, represented by four arch-heretics.

CHAPTER IX.

The revolution of Portugal, and the disgrace of the count-duke.

A FEW days after the king's return, a very disagreeable piece of news spread all over Madrid. It was reported that the Portuguese, looking upon the revolt of the Catalonians as a fair occasion offered to them by fortune for shaking off the Spanish yoke, had taken up arms, and chosen the Duke of Braganza for their king; that they were resolved to maintain him on the throne, and were confident of success; Spain having at that time on her hands enemies in Germany, Italy, Flanders, and Catalonia: indeed they could not have found a more favourable conjuncture for freeing themselves from a dominion which they detested.*

What is very singular is, that the count-duke, while both court and city seemed to be struck with consternation at the news, wanted to joke with the king at the expense of the Duke of Braganza: but Philip, far from being pleased with his raillery, assumed a very grave air, which disconcerted him, and made him foresee his disgrace. He no longer doubted his own fall, when he understood that the queen had openly declared herself against him, and loudly accused

* This revolution, which happened in the year 1640, was conducted with such surprising secresy (though the design was known to more than two hundred persons a year before) that the Duke of Braganza was declared king, and the Spanish yoke shook off, in one day, through all the Portuguese dominions in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

clared herself against him, and loudly accused him of having, by his bad administration, occasioned the revolt of Portugal. The greatest part of the grandees, especially those who had been at Saragossa, no sooner perceived that a tempest was brewing over the head of the count-duke, than they joined the queen; and what gave the last stroke to his favour was, the arrival of the Duchess-dowager of Mantua, formerly governess of Portugal. This lady, on her return from Lisbon to Madrid, plainly demonstrated to the king, that the revolution of that kingdom happened through the fault of the prime-minister.

The discourse of this princess made a great impression on the mind of the monarch; who, being at length roused from his infatuation for his favourite, stripped him of all the affection which he had entertained for him. When the minister was informed that the king listened to his enemies, he wrote a letter to him asking leave to resign his employment, and remove from court, since people were so unjust as to impute to him all the misfortunes which had happened to the kingdom during the course of his administration. He thought that this letter would have a great effect, and that the prince still preserved so much friendship for him as to detain him at court; but all the answer which his majesty returned, was the permission that he desired, with leave to retire whithersoever he would.

These words, written by the king's own hand, were a thunderbolt to his grace, who by no means expected such a reply; but, though he was very much confounded, he affected an air of constancy, and asked what I would do were I in his place. 'I would soon take my resolution,' said

I; 'I would abandon the court, and pass the rest of my days in peace at some one of my estates in the country.'—'That is a wholesome advice,' replied my master; 'and I am fully resolved to finish my career at Loeches, after I shall have once more conversed with the king; for I want to demonstrate to him, that I have done all that human prudence could suggest to sustain the weighty burden with which I was loaded; and that it was impossible for me to prevent the melancholy events laid at my door; being no more to blame than a skilful pilot, who, in spite of all he can do, sees his vessel tossed about by the waves and winds.' The minister still flattered himself, that, by speaking to the prince, he might adjust matters, and regain the ground which he had lost; but he never could procure an audience; and, besides, one was sent to demand the key of the door by which he used to enter when he pleased into his majesty's apartment. Concluding, then, that there were no further hopes for him, he determined in good earnest to retire. He examined his papers, a great quantity of which he very prudently committed to the flames; then naming the officers of his household and valets who he intended should follow him, he gave orders for his departure, which was fixed for next day. As he was afraid of being insulted by the populace in coming out of the palace, he slipped away early in the morning by the kitchen-door, and getting into a sorry coach, with his confessor and me, safely proceeded for Loeches, a village belonging to him, where his lady had built a magnificent convent for nuns of the Dominican order. Thither he repaired in less than four hours, and all his attendants arrived soon after.

CHAPTER X.

The anxiety and cares which at first disturbed the repose of the count-duke, and the happy tranquillity by which they were succeeded. The occupations of the minister in his retreat.

MADAM d'Olivarez let her husband set out for Loeches, and staid a few days after him at court, with a design to try if, by her tears and entreaties, she could not effect his being recalled: but in vain did she prostrate herself before their majesties; the king had no regard to her remonstrances, though artfully prepared; and the queen, who hated her mortally, beheld her tears with pleasure. The minister's wife was not repulsed for all that: she humbled herself so far as to implore the good offices of the queen's ladies; but the fruit which she reaped from her meanness was to perceive that it excited contempt rather than compassion. Vexed at having taken such humbling steps to no purpose, she went and joined her husband, to grieve with him for the loss of a place, which, under a reign like that of Philip the Fourth, was perhaps the first of the monarchy.

The lady's report of the condition in which she left Madrid, redoubled the affliction of the count-duke: 'Your enemies,' said she, weeping, 'the Duke de Medina Cœli, and the other grandees, who hate you, incessantly praise the king for having deprived you of the ministry; and the people celebrate your disgrace with an insolence of joy, as if the end of the national misfortune was attached to that of your administration.'

'Madam,' said my master to her, 'follow my example, and stifle your sorrow; we must yield to the tempest which we cannot divert. I thought, indeed, that I could have perpetuated my favour even to the end of my life; the ordinary illusion of ministers and favourites, who forget that their fate depends upon their sovereign. Has not the Duke of Lerma been deceived as well as I, though he imagined that his purple was the sure guaranty of the eternal duration of his authority?'

In this manner did the count-duke exhort his spouse to arm herself with patience; while he himself was in an agitation, which was daily increased by the despatches which he received from Don Henry, who, having remained at court to observe, took care to inform him exactly of every thing that happened: it was Scipio that brought the letters from that young nobleman, whom he still served, I having quitted him on his marriage with Donna Juana. The despatches of this adopted son were always filled with bad news, and unhappily no others were expected from him. Sometimes he wrote, that the grandees, not contented with rejoicing publicly at the retreat of the count-duke, were again reunited to turn out all his creatures from the posts and employments which they possessed, to replace them with his enemies; another time, he observed, that Don Lewis de Haro began to come into favour, and would, in all probability, be made prime minister. Of all the disagreeable news which my master received, that which seemed to affect him most, was the change made in the viceroyalty of Naples, which the court, solely to mortify him, took from the Duke de

Medina de las Torres, whom he loved, and gave it to the Admiral of Castile, whom he had always hated.

I may venture to say, that during three months his grace felt nothing in his solitude but trouble and chagrin: but his confessor, who was a Dominican friar, and, with the most solid piety, possessed a manly eloquence, had power enough to console him. By means of representing with energy, that he ought to bend his thoughts entirely to his own salvation, he had, with the help of grace, the good fortune to detach his mind from the court. His excellency would no longer hear any news from Madrid, his whole care being now engrossed in preparing for his latter end. Madam d'Olivarez, also, making a good use of her retreat, met with a consolation prepared by Providence in the convent which she had founded. There were among the nuns some holy maidens, whose conversation, full of balm, insensibly sweetened the bitterness of her life. In proportion as my master turned his thoughts from worldly affairs, he became more and more tranquil; and in this manner regulated the day. He spent almost the whole morning in hearing mass in the church of the convent, then returned to dinner; after which he amused himself about two hours, in playing at all sorts of games with me, and some other of his most affectionate domestics; then usually retired by himself into his closet, where he remained till sunset; at which time he took a turn in his garden, or an airing in his coach, to the neighbourhood of his castle, accompanied sometimes by his confessor, and sometimes by me.

One day, being alone with him, and admiring

the serenity of his countenance, I took the liberty to say, 'My lord, allow me to express my joy: from the air of satisfaction in your looks, I conclude that your excellency begins to be accustomed to retirement.'—'I am already quite familiarized to it,' answered he: 'and though I have been a long time used to business, I protest to thee, child, that I am every day more and more pleased with the quiet and peaceable life which I lead in this place.'

CHAPTER XI.

The count-duke becomes, all of a sudden, sad and thoughtful: the surprising cause of his melancholy, with its fatal consequence.

His grace in order to vary his occupations, amused himself sometimes also in cultivating his garden. One day, while I beheld him at work, he said to me in a jocular strain, 'Santillane, thou seest a minister banished from court turned gardener at Loeches.'—'My lord,' answered I, in the same tone, 'methinks I see Dionysius of Syracuse school-master at Corinth.' My master smiled at my reply, and was not at all displeased at the comparison.

All the people in the house were overjoyed to see their master superior to his disgrace, charmed with a life so different from that which he had always led, when we perceived with sorrow that he visibly changed: he became gloomy, thoughtful, and sunk into a most profound melancholy. He left off playing with us, and no

longer seemed sensible of all that we could invent for his diversion; but locked himself up after dinner in his closet, where he remained alone till night: we imagined that his chagrin had been occasioned by the returning ideas of his past greatness, and in that opinion left with him the Dominican friar, whose eloquence, however, could not triumph over the melancholy of his grace, which, instead of diminishing, seemed daily to increase.

It came into my head, that the pensiveness of this minister might have some particular cause, which he was unwilling to disclose; and on this conjecture I formed the design of drawing the secret from him: for this purpose, I lay in wait for an opportunity of speaking to him in private, and having found it, 'My lord,' said I, with an air of respect mingled with affection,' 'May Gil Blas be so bold as to put one question to his master?'—'Speak,' he replied; 'I give thee leave.'—'What,' said I, 'is become of that satisfaction which appeared in your excellency's face? have you no longer that ascendancy which you had once gained over fortune? or does your lost favour excite new regret within you? would you be plunged again in that abyss of trouble from which your virtue hath extricated you?'—'No, thank heaven!' resumed the minister, 'my memory is no longer engrossed by the part which I acted at court; I have for ever forgot the honours which I there enjoyed.'—'Why then,' said I, 'since you have philosophy enough to banish these things from your remembrance, are you so weak as to abandon yourself to a melancholy which alarms us all? What is the matter with you, my dear master?' added I, throwing myself at his

feet, 'you have, doubtless, some secret sorrow that consumes you: will you make a mystery of it to Santillane, whose zeal, fidelity, and discretion, you know so well? By what misfortune have I lost your confidence?'

'Thou hast it still,' said he; 'but I confess I have a reluctance to reveal the cause of that sadness with which thou seest me overwhelmed: nevertheless, I cannot resist the entreaties of such a servant and a friend as thee. Know, then, the cause of my disquiet, which is a secret that I could impart to none but Santillane. Yes,' continued he, 'I am a prey to the most dismal melancholy, which gradually consumes my life. I see almost every moment a spectre, which presents itself before me in the most terrible shape. In vain have I said to myself that it is no more than an illusion, an unsubstantial phantom of my brain, the continual apparition infests my view, and disturbs my repose. Though my understanding is strong enough to persuade me that this spectre is really nothing, I am notwithstanding weak enough to be afflicted at the vision. This is what thou hast forced me to disclose,' added he; 'and thou mayest judge whether or not I am to blame in concealing from all the world the cause of my melancholy.' I was equally grieved and astonished to hear such an extraordinary declaration, which was a strong indication of the machine's being disordered. 'My lord,' said I to the minister, 'is not this occasioned by too little nourishment? for your abstinence is excessive.'—'That was what I imagined at first,' answered he; 'and to try if it was actually owing to my diet, I have for some days past eaten more than usual, but without any effect: the phantom

still appears.'—'It will certainly disappear,' said I, to console him; 'and if your excellency would relax yourself a little, by playing again with your faithful servants, I believe you would soon find yourself delivered from these gloomy vapours.'

In a little time after this conversation, his grace fell sick; and, finding the affair grow serious, sent to Madrid for two notaries to make his will; as also for three famous physicians, who had the reputation of curing their patients sometimes. As soon as the arrival of these last was reported in the castle, nothing was heard but groans and lamentations: the servants looked upon the death of their master as just at hand; so much were they prejudiced against these gentlemen, who had brought along with them an apothecary and surgeon, the usual executioners of their prescriptions. They let the notaries do their business; after which they prepared to do their own. Being of Dr. Sangrado's principles, in their very first consultation they ordered repeated bloodings; so that in six days they reduced the count-duke to extremity, and on the seventh delivered him entirely from his apparition.*

Upon the death of this minister, a deep and sincere sorrow reigned in the castle of Loeches; all his domestics wept bitterly: far from consoling themselves for his loss, with the certainty of being comprehended in his will, there was not one among them who would not have renounced his legacy to recall him to life. As for me, who had

* The count-duke died on the 12th of July, 1645, not at Loeches, but at Toro in New Castile; his death (according to report) having been hastened by his relations, who seeing him become more and more odious to the people, even in spite of his retreat, were afraid of his suffering some new ignominy to the further disgrace of his family

been beloved by him, and whose attachment flowed from pure personal affection, I was more afflicted than all the rest; and question whether I shed more tears for Antonia than for the count-duke.

CHAPTER XII.

The transactions at the castle of Loeches after the death of the count-duke; and the departure of Santillane.

The minister, according to his own direction, was buried, without noise and pomp, in the convent of nuns, by the sound of our lamentations. After the funeral, Madam d'Olivarez ordered the will to be read, with which all the domestics had reason to be satisfied. Every one had a legacy proportioned to his station; and the least was two thousand crowns: mine was the most considerable; his grace having bequeathed to me ten thousand pistoles, as a proof of his particular affection. He did not forget the hospitals, and founded annual service in several convents.

Madame d'Olivarez sent all the domestics to Madrid, to receive their legacies from the steward, Don Raymond Caporis, who had orders to pay them, I being detained at the castle seven or eight days by a high fever, which was the fruit of my affliction. In this situation I was not abandoned by the Dominican friar; that good clergyman had conceived an affection for me; and interesting himself in my salvation, asked, when he

saw me in a fair way, what I intended to do. 'I don't know, my good father,' answered I; 'I have not as yet determined with myself on that score: at some moments I am tempted to shut myself up in a cell, and do penance.'—'Those are precious moments!' cried the Dominican: 'Signior de Santillane, you will do well to profit by them. I advise you as a friend, without your ceasing to be a layman, to retire, for example, into our convent at Madrid; to make yourself a benefactor to it by a donation of all your fortune, and die there under the habit of St. Dominique. A great many people expiate a worldly life by such an end.'

I was then in such a disposition of mind, that I began to relish the advice, and told his reverence that I would consider of it. But having consulted Scipio, whom I saw immediately after the monk, he inveighed against that sentiment, which seemed to him the whim of a sick person. 'Fie! Signior de Santillane,' said he; 'can you be pleased with such a retreat? will not your house at Lirias afford one much more agreeable? if you was delighted with it heretofore, you will have a much better relish for the sweets of it now that you are of an age much more proper for tasting the beauties of nature.'

The son of Coscolina had no great difficulty in making me change my opinion. 'Friend,' said I, 'thou hast prevailed over the Dominican. I see it will be better for me to return to my castle; and fix my resolution accordingly: we will repair to Lirias as soon as I shall be in a condition to travel.' And this happened very soon: for the fever having left me in a little time, I found myself strong enough to put my design in execution. Scipio and I went first to Madrid, the sight of

which city no longer gave me that pleasure which I had formerly felt. As I knew that almost all its inhabitants abhorred the memory of a minister of whom I preserved the most tender remembrance, I could not behold it with a favourable eye; and therefore staid in it only five or six days, which Scipio employed in making preparations for our departure for Lirias. While he was busy about our equipage, I went to Caporis, who gave me my legacy in doubloons: I likewise visited the receivers of the commanderies on whom I had pensions, took measures with them for the payment; and, in a word, put all my affairs in order.

On the evening before our departure, I asked the son of Coscolina, if he had taken his leave of Don Henry. 'Yes,' answered he; 'we this morning parted good friends: he assured me that he was sorry for my leaving him. But if he was satisfied with me, I was not so with him: it is not enough that the valet pleases the master, the master ought, at the same time, to please the valet; otherwise they are very ill met. Besides,' added he, 'Don Henry makes but a pitiful figure at court, where he is sunk into the lowest contempt. He is even pointed at in the streets, and every body calls him the son of the Genoese. So you may guess whether or not it is agreeable to a lad of honour to serve a man in such disgrace.'

At length we set out from Madrid early one morning, and took the road to Cuença, in the following order and equipage: my confidant and I were mounted in a chaise and pair, conducted by a postillion: three moyles, loaded with our baggage and money, and led by two grooms, followed close after; and two lusty lacquies, chosen by Scipio, mounted on mules, and armed to the

teeth, brought up the rear; the grooms wore sabres, and the postillion had two good pistols at his saddle-bow. As we were in all seven men, six of whom were very resolute, I travelled merrily, without any apprehension of losing my legacy. Our moyles proudly sounding their bells in the villages through which we passed, the peasants ran to their doors to see the march of our equipage, which they imagined belonged to some grandee going to take possession of a vice-royalty.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gil Blas returns to his castle, where he is overjoyed to find Seraphina, his god-daughter, marriageable; and falls in love with another lady.

I SPENT fifteen days on the road to Lirias, being under no necessity of travelling fast: all that I desired was to arrive at it safely; and my wish was accomplished. The sight of my castle at first inspired me with some melancholy thoughts, in recalling the memory of Antonia; but I soon banished them, by entertaining my fancy with more pleasant ideas; and this I could the more easily do, as twenty years, which were elapsed since her death, had a good deal weakened the force of my sorrow.

As soon as I entered the castle, Beatrice and her daughter came with great eagerness to salute me: then the father, mother, and child, hugged

one another with transports of joy, which charmed me.

After their mutual embraces I looked at my god-daughter attentively, saying, 'Can this be that Seraphina whom I left in the cradle, when I departed from Lirias? I am overjoyed to see her again, so tall and so handsome: we must have her settled for life.'—'How! my dear god-father,' cried she, reddening at my last words, 'you have seen me but for a moment, and you already talk of getting rid of me!'—'No, my child,' answered I; 'we don't intend to lose you by marriage: we must have a husband who will enjoy you without robbing your parents of your company, and in a manner live with us altogether.'

'Such a one offers at present,' said Beatrice: 'a gentleman of this country, having seen Seraphina one day at mass, in the village chapel, fell in love with her. He has been to visit me, declared his passion, and asked my consent. "If you had it," said I to him, "you would be never the nearer; Seraphina depends upon her father and god-father, who alone can dispose of her. All that I can do for you is to inform them by a letter of your demand, which I own does honour to my daughter." Really, gentlemen,' added she, 'I was going to write about it immediately; but now that you are returned, you shall do in it what you think proper.'

'But,' said Scipio, 'what character hath this hidalgo? is he like the most of your small gentry, proud of his nobility, and insolent to plebeians?'—'Not at all,' replied Beatrice; 'he is a sweet-tempered young man, extremely polite, has a good mien, and is not yet full thirty.'—'You draw an agreeable picture of that cavalier,' said I to

Beatrice; 'pray, what is his name?'—'Don Juan de Jutella,' answered Scipio's wife: 'he has but lately succeeded to his father, and lives in a castle about a league from hence, with a younger sister, who is under his care.'—'I have formerly,' said I, 'heard of this gentleman's family, which is one of the most noble in the kingdom of Valencia.'—'I esteem his nobility,' cried Scipio, 'less than the qualities of his heart and understanding, and this Don Juan will suit us very well, provided he be a man of honour.'—'He has the reputation of one,' said Seraphina, joining in the conversation: 'the inhabitants of Lirias, who know him, give him the best of characters.' At these words of my god-daughter, I smiled to her father; who, having likewise observed them, concluded that his daughter was not displeased at her gallant.

This cavalier soon got notice of our arrival at Lirias; and two days after appeared at our castle. He saluted us gracefully; and, far from contradicting by his presence what Beatrice had said to his advantage, his behaviour made us conceive a high opinion of his merit. He told us, that, as our neighbour, he had come to congratulate us upon our happy return; and we received him with all the courtesy in our power: but this visit, which was made out of pure civility, passed in mutual compliments; and Don Juan, without having mentioned a syllable of his passion for Seraphina, retired, only desiring our permission to profit by a neighbourhood which he foresaw would be very agreeable to him. When he was gone, Beatrice asking our opinions of the gentleman: we answered, that he had prepossessed us in his favour; and that, in all appearance, fortune could not offer a better match for Seraphina.

The very next day I went out after dinner, with Coscolina's son, to return the visit which we owed to Don Juan. We took the road to his castle, conducted by a guide, who (when we had walked about three quarters of an hour) said, 'There is the castle of Don Juan de Jutella.' In vain did we cast our eyes all around the country: it was a long time before we perceived it; nay, we did not discover it till we arrived at the gate: for it was situated at the foot of a mountain, in the middle of a wood, whose lofty trees concealed it from the view. The house denoted the nobility more than the opulence of its master; however, when we entered, we found the craziness of the building compensated by the richness of the furniture.

Don Juan received us in a very handsome hall, where he introduced us to a lady whom he called his sister Dorothea, and who seemed to be about the age of nineteen or twenty. She was full dressed; because, having expected our visit, she was desirous of appearing as amiable as she could; and, offering herself to my view, in all her charms, she made the same impression that Antonia had made upon my heart; that is, I was disconcerted; but concealed my disorder so well, that Scipio himself did not observe it. Our conversation, like that of the preceding day, turned upon the mutual pleasure we should enjoy, in visiting one another, and living together in good neighbourhood. He did not, as yet, speak to us of Seraphina, and we gave him no encouragement to declare his passion, resolving that it should first come from himself. During the conversation I frequently eyed Dorothea, though I affected to look at her as little as possible; and every time

our eyes met she darted fresh arrows into my soul. I must say, however, for the sake of truth, that this beloved object was not a perfect beauty; for, though her skin was of a dazzling whiteness, and her lips of the complexion of the rose, her nose was somewhat too long, and her eyes too little. Nevertheless, the whole together quite enchanted me.

In short, I did not leave the castle of Jutella as I had entered it; and on my return to Lirias, my mind was so wholly possessed by Dorothea, that I saw nothing but her, and she was the sole subject of my conversation. 'How, master!' said Scipio, looking at me with astonishment, 'you are very full of Don Juan's sister. Hath she made a conquest of your heart?'—'Yes, friend,' answered I; 'and I blush at my own weakness. O heavens! must I, who, since Antonia's death, have beheld a thousand beauties with indifference, meet with one at my age, who, in spite of all my endeavours, inflames me with love!'—'Well, sir,' replied Coscolina's son: 'you ought to rejoice instead of complaining at the adventure: there is nothing ridiculous in a man of your age being in love; and time hath not as yet so furred your brow, as to deprive you of the hope of pleasing. Take my advice; and when next you see Don Juan, boldly demand his sister in marriage; he cannot refuse her to such a person as you: and besides, if it is absolutely necessary that Dorothea's husband should be a gentleman, are not you one? You have letters of nobility, and that is enough for your posterity, when time shall have shrouded these letters with that thick veil which covers the origin of all great families. After four or five

generations, the race of Santillane will be most illustrious!'

CHAPTER XIV.

The double marriage celebrated at Lirias, which concludes the history of Gil Blas de Santillane.

Scipio, by this discourse, encouraged me to declare myself the lover of Dorothea, without considering that he exposed me to the risk of a refusal; I could not, however, determine upon it without trembling; for, although I looked younger than I was, and could have sunk ten good years at least of my age, I could not help thinking I had good reason to doubt of my pleasing a young beauty. I resolved, nevertheless, to risk the demand, as soon as I should see her brother; who, for his part, being uncertain of obtaining my god-daughter, was not without abundance of anxiety.

He returned to my house next morning just as I was done dressing, and said, 'Signior de Santillane, I am come to-day to talk with you about a serious affair.' I carried him into my closet, where coming to the point at once, 'I believe,' continued he, 'that you are not ignorant of my errand. I love Seraphina; and as you can sway her father to any thing, pray, render him favourable to me; procure for me the object of my passion, and let me owe the happiness of my life to you.'—Signior Don Juan,' answered I, 'since you come to the business at once, give me leave to follow your example; and, after having promised you my

good offices with the father of my god-daughter, to demand your interest with your sister, in my behalf.'

At these last words, Don Juan expressed an agreeable surprise, from which I drew a favourable omen. 'Is it possible,' cried he, 'that Dorothea made a conquest of your heart yesterday?' —'I am quite charmed with her!' said I; 'and will think myself the happiest of mankind, if my demand is agreeable to you both.'—'Of that you may be assured,' he replied: 'noble as we are, we will not disdain your alliance.'—'I am very glad,' answered I, 'that you make no difficulty in receiving a plebeian for your brother-in-law; I esteem you the more on that account; and in so doing you show your good understanding: but were you even so vain as to refuse your sister's hand to any body but a gentleman, know that I could satisfy your pride; I have laboured twenty years under the minister: and the king, to recompense the services which I have done the state, has gratified me with letters of nobility, which you shall see.' So saying, I took my patent out of the drawer where it lay concealed, and presented it to the gentleman, who read it attentively from beginning to end with vast satisfaction. 'This is excellent!' said he, restoring the papers: 'Dorothea is yours.'—'And you,' cried I, 'may depend upon Seraphina.'

These two marriages being thus resolved upon, all that remained was to know if the brides would consent with a good grace; for Don Juan and I, being equally delicate, did not intend to force their inclinations. That gentleman returned, therefore, to his castle of Jutella, to propose me to his sister: and I assembled Scipio, Beatrice,

and their daughter, to communicate the conversation I had with that cavalier. Beatrice was for accepting him without hesitation; and Seraphina, by her silence, showed that she was of her mother's opinion. As to the father, he was not indeed averse to the match; but expressed some uneasiness about the dowry, which, he said, must be given to the gentleman, whose castle had such pressing need of repairs. I stopped Scipio's mouth, telling him, that affair concerned me; and that I would make a present to my goddaughter of four thousand pistoles for her portion.

Don Juan returning that very evening, 'Your affairs,' said I to him, 'succeed to a miracle: I wish mine may be in no worse condition.'— 'They are also on an excellent footing,' he replied: 'I had no occasion to employ authority to obtain Dorothea's consent: your person is to her liking, and she is pleased with your behaviour.' You was apprehensive of your being disagreeable to her; and she is more justly afraid, that having nothing but her heart and hand to offer—' 'What more would I have!' cried I in a transport of joy: 'since the charming Dorothea has no reluctance to unite her fate with mine, I ask no more. I am rich enough to marry her without a portion, and the possession of her alone will crown my wishes!'

Don Juan and I, very well pleased with having brought matters happily so far, resolved to hasten our nuptials, by suppressing all superfluous ceremonies. I brought this gentleman and Seraphina's parents together; and after they had agreed upon the conditions of the marriage, he took his leave, promising to return next day with Dorothea. The desire I had of appearing agreeable to that lady, made me employ three good hours

at least in adjusting and Adonizing myself; and yet, for all that, I could not make myself pleased with my own person. It is only a pleasure for a young man to prepare himself for visiting his mistress; but to one who begins to grow old, it is quite a fatigue. However, I was more happy than I deserved to be.

When next I saw Don Juan's sister, she regarded me with such a favourable eye, that I imagined myself still good for something. I had a long conversation with her, was charmed with her disposition, and concluded, that, with delicate behaviour, and a great deal of complaisance, I should become a beloved spouse. Elevated with this agreeable hope, I sent to Valencia for two notaries, who drew up the contract of marriage, then we had recourse to the Curate of Paterna, who came to Lirias, and married Don Juan and me to our mistresses.

Thus, for a second time, did I light the torch of Hymen, and had no cause to repent my conduct. Dorothea, like a virtuous wife, made a pleasure of her duty; and, sensible of my care to anticipate her desires, soon attached herself to me, as much as if I had been a young man. On the other hand, Don Juan and my god-daughter were inflamed with mutual ardour; and, what was very singular, the two sisters-in-law conceived the most passionate and sincere friendship for one another. As for my part, I found so many good qualities in my brother-in-law, that I felt a real affection for him, and he did not repay it with ingratitude. In short, the union that reigned among us was such, that in the evening, when we parted only till next day, that separation was not performed without pain; so that of the two fami

lies we resolved to make one, which should live sometimes at the castle of Lirias, and sometimes at that of Jutella, which, for this purpose, received great reparations, by the help of his excellency's pistoles.

I have for three years, gentle reader, led a delicious life with people whom I love so much; and, to crown my felicity, heaven has blessed me with two children, whom I piously believe to be my own, and whose education shall be the amusement of my old age.

THE END.